

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/3257>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

'OUT OF A MEDIUM'S MOUTH':
YEATS'S ART IN RELATION TO MEDIUMSHIP,
SPIRITUALISM, AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

By
SPYRIDON ILIOPOULOS, B.A., M.A.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies

October 1985

C O N T E N T S

| | page |
|--|------|
| PLATES | v |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vi |
| SUMMARY | viii |
| ABBREVIATIONS | ix |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Subject of the Thesis | 1 |
| A. Survey of Critical Attitudes towards the Subject | 2 |
| Plan of the Thesis | 14 |
| Notes to Introduction | 19 |
| CHAPTER 1: YEATS'S SPIRITUALISTIC PAPERS | 22 |
| Records of Seances | 23 |
| 1912 | 24 |
| 1913 | 30 |
| 1914 | 31 |
| 1915 | 33 |
| 1916 | 36 |
| 'Correspondence' with Leo Africanus | 37 |
| Essays | 37 |
| 'The Poet and the Actress' | 38 |
| 'Clairvoyant Search for Will' | 40 |
| Correspondence with Friends and Associates | 41 |
| Writings by Others | 41 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Henry Bergson's 'Presidential Address' | |
| to the SPR | 42 |
| The 'Note-book of Stainton Moses' | 42 |
| Notes to Chapter 1 | 46 |
| CHAPTER 2: YEATS AS A 'SPIRITUALIST' AND 'PSYCHICAL RESEARCHER' | 51 |
| Background Information | 52 |
| The 'Leo Case' | 59 |
| The Radcliffe Experiments | 73 |
| The Alleged Miracle at Mirebeau | 79 |
| Conclusion | 81 |
| Notes to Chapter 2 | 85 |
| CHAPTER 3: <u>THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE</u> AS AN EXAMPLE | 91 |
| Notes to Chapter 3 | 107 |
| CHAPTER 4: <u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u> : A FIRST ATTEMPT | 110 |
| Notes to Chapter 4 | 127 |
| CHAPTER 5: <u>THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE</u> : GHOSTLY PRESENCES | 129 |
| Notes to Chapter 5 | 138 |
| CHAPTER 6: 'EGO DOMINUS TUUS': YEATS, LEO AFRICANUS, AND THE PROCESS OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION | 140 |
| Notes to Chapter 6 | 167 |
| CHAPTER 7: SPIRITUALISTIC SCENARIOS IN <u>MICHAEL ROBARTES AND THE DANCER</u> | 174 |
| Notes to Chapter 7 | 194 |
| CHAPTER 8: FROM <u>THE TOWER</u> TO <u>LAST POEMS</u> | 199 |

| | page |
|---|------|
| Notes to Chapter 8 | 226 |
| CONCLUSION | 230 |
| Notes to Conclusion | 233 |
| NOTE ON APPENDICES | 234 |
| APPENDIX A: Records of Seances | 237 |
| A: 1 'Report of Seance', May 9, 1912 | 237 |
| A: 2 'Seance held at Cambridge House', June 5, 1912 | 242 |
| A: 3 'Seance with Peters', October 26, 1912 | 247 |
| A: 4 'Second Seance [with] Peters', October 27, 1912 | 253 |
| A: 5 'Third Seance with Peters, October 27, 1912 | 257 |
| A: 6 'Peters' Seance', October 30, 1912 | 265 |
| A: 7 'Seances at Madame Bisson's', May 1914 | 270 |
| A: 8 [Record of Seance], May 7, 1915 | 274 |
| A: 9 'Seance with Mrs Harris', July 8, 1915 | 277 |
| A: 10 'Seance at Mrs Wriedt's', July 20, 1915 | 281 |
| A: 11 [Record of Seance], July 22, 1915 | 283 |
| A: 12 [Lady Gregory Converses with 'Hugh Lane'], July 25, 1915 | 284 |
| A: 13 'Sitting with Mrs Leonard', December 27, 1916 | 285 |
| APPENDIX B: MS headed 'Leo Africanus' | 289 |
| APPENDIX C: Essays | 322 |
| C: 1 'The Poet and the Actress' | 322 |
| C: 2 'Clairvoyant Search for Will' | 330 |

| | page |
|---|------|
| APPENDIX D: 'Note-book of Stainton Moses' | 340 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 353 |

P L A T E S

| | page |
|--|------|
| Plate 1: Page 1 of 'Seance held at Cambridge House', June 5, 1912 | 24 |
| Plate 2: Page 12 of 'The Poet and the Actress' | 38 |
| Plate 3: The first page of Leo's letter to Yeats | 69 |
| Plate 4: The first page of Yeats's postscript to Leo | 72 |

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

First and foremost, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Professor J. R. Mulryne of the University of Warwick, for his unfailing guidance and skilled editorial assistance. Certainly, the many and often painful phases of the preparation of this thesis would have come to nothing without his patience.

I am also grateful to Professor Arnold Goldman of the University of Keele, whose essay on 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in George Mills Harper's Yeats and the Occult (1975, 1976) has been a major stimulus. Professor Goldman shared with me his ideas and papers with generosity.

Thanks to the helpful correspondence of Senator Michael Yeats, I have been able to obtain information about, and access to, unpublished Yeats material, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Professor M. Byron Raizis of the University of Athens, for he has been a positive influence since he encouraged me with his favourable criticism of my published work on Yeats.

I should also thank the mathematician Guillermo

Pastor for long discussions on the relationship between science and psychical research.

To the following people I am grateful for various kinds of assistance: Mr John Goode, Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Warwick, Dr Andrew Horton, Associate Professor of Film and Literature at the University of New Orleans, Dr Ruth Gounelas and Mrs Liana Sakelliou.

Moreover, I wish to thank the staff of the National Library of Ireland, as well as the Society for Psychical Research.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife Xanthi, for without her patient assistance I would not have completed this thesis, and without her keen sight I would not have trusted my magnifying glass.

S U M M A R Y

The aim of this thesis is to show that, despite a number of critics who either frowned upon or ignored W. B. Yeats's psychical interests, consideration of his mediumistic encounters between 1911 and 1916 is indispensable to the study of his art. Indeed, Yeats's unpublished records of seances and his other spiritualistic papers often present us with his direct sources of inspiration and point towards an understanding of their subsequent elaboration in some of his celebrated works.

Chapter 1 and 2 ('Yeats's Spiritualistic Papers' and 'Yeats as a "Spiritualist" and "Psychical Researcher"') supply general information as regards unpublished material and describe Yeats's involvement with mediums, 'controls', and 'spirit-visitors'.

Chapter 3 ('The Words upon the Window-pane as an Example') deals with Yeats's spiritualistic sources and their dramatic elaboration in his seance-play, his only work where he made direct use of a spiritualistic setting and of the typical personae who frequent seance-rooms. Although Yeats's other works are discussed in a chronological order, this play is given priority here, for it contains some major themes and motifs which pervade his art.

Chapters 4 and 5 ('Responsibilities: A First Attempt', and 'The Wild Swans at Coole: Ghostly Presences') deal with Yeats's attempts to introduce some major aspects of his psychical interests into his poetry by 'invoking' his dead and by adopting the persona of a medium in poems such as 'To a Shade' and 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory'.

Chapter 6 ('"Ego Dominus Tuus": Yeats, Leo Africanus, and the Process of Self-transformation') deals separately with 'Ego Dominus Tuus', another poem from The Wild Swans at Coole, in relation to Yeats's encounter with his 'opposite', the 'ghost' of Leo Africanus, and his formulation of the concept of the 'Daemon'.

Chapters 7 and 8 ('Spiritualistic Scenarios in Michael Robartes and the Dancer' and 'From The Tower to Last Poems') examine Yeats's later use of themes, motifs, and central situations particular to spiritualism and psychical research.

Finally, the Conclusion suggests that, although Yeats's psychical investigations did not answer the 'great question whether the soul be immortal or not', his mediumistic encounters provided with images, symbols, and scenarios which enriched his art and often determined his literary tactics.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

- A Autobiographies, London: Macmillan, 1955
- CP The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, second edition,
 London: Macmillan, 1950
- E & I Essays and Introductions, London: Macmillan, 1969
- G & E Ideas of Good and Evil, New York: Russell and
 Russell, 1967
- IIWFT If I Were Four-and-Twenty, Dublin: The Cuala
 Press, 1940
- Letters The Letters of W. B. Yeats, edited by Allan Wade,
 London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954
- Memoirs Memoirs: Autobiography - First Draft; Journal,
 transcribed and edited by Denis Donoghue,
 London: Macmillan, 1972
- PA Per Amica Silentia Lunae, London: Macmillan, 1918
- V A Vision, second edition, London: Macmillan, 1937;
 reissued with corrections 1962
- W & B Wheels and Butterflies, London: Macmillan, 1934

Where got I that truth?
Out of a medium's mouth,
Out of nothing it came.....

W. B. Yeats, 'Fragments'

One afternoon during the early years of my psychic novitiate I met with a curious instance of telepathy, between myself and the poet W. B. Yeats. He attended one of our sittings in Dublin. Mrs Dowden described it ... as follows:

'Astor [my control] opened the proceedings with a description of an old castle which had just been bought by Mr Yeats, and told him the place was haunted. The hauntings, as described by the control, involved in their explanation a romantic story.'

Mrs Dowden was not sitting with me at the ouija-board. At last she said to Mr Yeats: 'Do you think we should let this communication wander on like this? Does it interest you?' He replied: 'Very much. This is the plot of my new play. But I was not thinking of it when the sitting began.'

Geraldine Cummins, Unseen Adventures (London, 1951)

'Then Leo came and at first we talked of theatre.'

W. B. Yeats, record of seance (July 20, 1915)

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Subject of the Thesis

From 1911 on, William Butler Yeats was attached to spiritualism and psychical research for some five years.¹ This is not surprising. Yeats searched for the metaphysical (and poetic) essence of the world not only in 'Madame' Blavatsky's theosophy, in Mathers' cabbalism, and in Indian thought, but also wherever he believed or suspected he could find it: in Heraclitus, in Plotinus, in alchemy, in Swedenborg, in the Noh theatre of the Ghosts. Following Paracelsus, 'who claimed to have collected his knowledge from midwife and hangman' (IIWFT, 23), he did not hesitate to seek this essence even in 'the wisdom of some fat old medium', 'in Soho or Holloway', and, in his mature years, he started 'going a good deal to seances for the first time' (IIWFT, 22).

Like all of Yeats's occult and esoteric interests, spiritualism found its poetic and dramatic equivalent in his art and left its marks on it. My aim in this thesis is to trace these marks in a considerable part of his writings, and to explore their literary significance. To this end I shall be mostly based on Yeats's unpublished records of seances and on other spiritualistic material he kept in his files. I have found that this material often presents us with his direct sources of inspiration and

points towards an understanding of their subsequent elaboration in some of his most celebrated works.

A Survey of Critical Attitudes towards the Subject

Before presenting the plan of this thesis, I should like to inform the reader as regards the chief attitudes which characterize the present state of criticism on the subject. A survey of these attitudes should also make clearer to the reader my own intentions.

Yeats's interest in spiritualism and psychical research has been largely ignored by critics. As a result, the literary significance of this interest has been overlooked. Some of the reasons which have caused this neglect are easy to understand. As Yeats's records of seances have not been published, writers are often based on the scanty material that is available in print: accounts by Yeats's friends and acquaintances,² newspaper reports,³ letters, short extracts from very few unpublished manuscripts,⁴ some entries from the text published as his Journal (Memoirs) and, more recently, two of Yeats's essays relating to his 'psychical' investigations.⁵ Of course, to these are added Yeats's references to spiritualism in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places', A Vision, and elsewhere. Certainly, this material is valuable for readers, students and critics; however, it is too fragmentary to permit a serious and systematic study of the relationship between Yeats's interest in spiritualism and the subsequent literary output. Moreover, it sometimes has an inhibiting effect on the reader, student

or critic who comes across an account of a seance such as the one presented in Yeats's letter of June 27 [1912]⁶ to Florence Farr:

I had a seance last night with Mrs Thompson, Myers' medium, very interesting though nothing exactly evidential. The control Nelly came — it was curious to watch the sudden change in the midst of a lively conversation. Nelly spoke of being in the medium's stomach (her mother's stomach she said) and complained that there was still some medium left in the head. She distinguished between what she got from spirits and what [she] saw in our stomachs.... Nelly said my stomach was hard to read ... and that I should wear a black beard and a white robe and be a Yogi priest and that she was uncomfortable because my hypnotism 'screwed out Mother's stomach' instead of Mother's 'screwing out' mine as it should be. (Letters, 569)

Certainly, the neglect of what has been recently named Yeats's 'spiritualist "interlude"'⁷ does not stem from a misunderstanding of his sense of humour; nor is it due to a failure to understand that he was interested in 'the sudden change in the midst of a lively conversation', in the 'absorbing drama' of seances (IIWFT, 22), rather than in Nelly's statement regarding the condition of his stomach. It seems that this neglect often arises from the poet's later renunciation of spiritualism. As soon as the intensity of his interest in the subject 'had waned', he was the first to 'minimize its attraction and influence as compared to that of other, "harder" esoterica';⁸ the 'private' mediumship of Georgie Hyde-Lees and the subsequent revelations of the 'teachers' were more stimulating than the routine of seance-rooms. Indeed, in the Introduction to the 1937 edition of A Vision, Yeats makes this confusing statement which, as will be seen

in Chapter 2, contradicts his earlier attitude towards spiritualism. With reference to his encounter with the 'teachers' through his wife's mediumship, Yeats writes:

Some will associate the story I have just told with that popular spiritualism which has not dared to define itself, to go like all great spiritual movements through a tragedy of separation and rejection, which instead of asking whether it is not something almost incredible, because altogether new or forgotten, clings to all that is vague and obvious in popular Christianity; and hate me for that association. (V, 24: my italics.)

Critics did not 'hate' Yeats 'for that association'.

If some of his contemporaries had mocked and ridiculed him as a seance-goer, or, in the best of cases, were 'racked by pity' when they imagined him climbing shabby steps in Soho, knocking at a door, giving a false name, paying a shilling, and entering a seance-room⁹ the majority of writers dealing with the occult aspects of Yeats's life and art chose to be discreet. To be more specific: writers are roughly divided into three categories. To the first category belong those who ignored the 'interlude' or preferred to suspend judgement, perhaps on the reasonable basis that the existing evidence on the subject was too limited. To the second category belong those who wrote on or referred to Yeats's interest in spiritualism but invariably expressed their distaste for it, failing to see its literary relevance. Finally, to the third category belong a few writers who took into account some of Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic papers and considered their relevance to his art, but did not go far enough in the direction of establishing a meaningful relationship between the two. The following survey presents examples which typify these three categories of

writers.

David R. Clark belongs to the first category. In 'Metaphors for Poetry': W. B. Yeats and the Occult',¹⁰ an otherwise very satisfactory discussion of Yeats's occult and esoteric interests, Clark does not even mention the 'spiritualist "interlude"'. From Yeats's early infatuation with the supernatural he passes to the poet's involvement in the Dublin Hermetic Society, to Blavatsky's Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, to MacGregor Mathers, to Shri Purohit Swami, and from there to the two editions of A Vision.

Basil Bunting, recollecting his memories of Yeats in a lecture to the Yeats Society at Sligo, also ignored the poet's interest in spiritualism and psychical research when he discussed some aspects of Yeats's involvement in the occult. He mentioned 'Magic, Rosicrucianism, theosophy', and 'even plain free-masonry', which provided Yeats 'with symbols he could use to build poems with, symbols which had not been over-worked by generations of previous poets', but did not find a word for spiritualism and for its significance in the study of Yeats's art, considering it, as it seems, to be among 'the rest of his paraphernalia'.¹¹

Similarly, Edward Malins, in his systematic and knowledgeable Preface to Yeats,¹² discusses the poet's involvement and reading in 'occult and magic' but does not mention Yeats's involvement and wide reading in spiritualistic theory and in the investigation of paranormal phenomena.

Virginia Moore belongs to the second category: she is among those who failed to see the literary significance of the 'interlude', partly because they were determined to frown upon it. In The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats's Search for Reality,¹³ Moore dedicated to the 'interlude' more space than any single writer had till 1954, and, indeed, more than anyone has till now. But, despite her honest efforts, and despite the fact that she had the advantage of interviewing Mrs Yeats, she was not well informed regarding Yeats's spiritualistic activities, and her account of the poet as a seance-goer and amateur psychical researcher is at times inaccurate.¹⁴ What is more significant in the context of this thesis, she did not see the marks of the 'interlude' on Yeats's art, with very few exceptions, as in her paragraph on Responsibilities.¹⁵ This, I believe, is due to her prejudice against second or third class metaphysics, i.e. spiritualism as compared with her favourite metaphysics of Christianity, and to the subsequent conviction that no first class poetry could have resulted from shallow metaphysics, at least if Yeats had not 'resorted more and more to the tact and dodge of metaphor' (p. 238). Moore misses the point that, as will be seen, Yeats, as an artist, gained from seance-rooms because they enriched his sense of drama and provided him with 'central situations' for his works, rather than because they furnished him with 'profound' doctrines. As Moore insists on the doctrinal aspects of Yeats's involvement in spiritualism it is not surprising that, already in the Introduction to The Unicorn, she considers the 'spiritualist "interlude"' or episode 'distasteful' (p. xv). It is not surprising, too, that at the very beginning of her

chapter on Yeatsian 'Spiritism' she writes:

It would be extremely easy to make Yeats look ridiculous by picturing him hunched forward in a darkened room, hanging upon the words of Nelly the control and Tulka the spirit guide. But it would not be just (p. 218).

But, for the careful examiner of Yeats's spiritualistic papers, such an attempt would not be extremely easy, in view of the fact that these present us with material which, from the literary, biographical, or psychological point of view, is much more important than any amusing anecdote about Yeats's obsession with 'spooks'. It seems that Moore had read very few of Yeats's spiritualistic papers,¹⁶ for if she had read them all she would not have found the 'interlude' so 'distasteful'. Surely, she would have been more sensitive towards its literary relevance, had she known that, between 1911 and 1916, Yeats was 'visited' by the 'spirits' of William Blake, Robert Burns, John Synge, and Parnell. Virginia Moore, as well as a number of other critics, did not know that such 'visits' were a part of Yeats's literary routine for some five years.

To sum up: too much is missing from Moore's chapter on Yeatsian 'Spiritism'. Despite its flaws, however, this chapter remains indispensable to the student of Yeats's occult interests, as well as to the general student of Yeats's life and art, because of Moore's ability to place the 'interlude' in the wider context of the poet's 'Search for Reality'. Moreover, it is to this writer's credit that she devoted a whole chapter to the 'interlude' and stimulated interest in Yeats's mediumistic encounters at a time when many were

still scornful of or 'just bored' by them.¹⁷

Moore's distaste for Yeats's 'dabbling' in spiritualism was shared by a number of other critics, before or after the publication of The Unicorn. Without dealing with the 'interlude' in specific terms, these critics felt aversion to Yeats's spiritualistic interests, as they did to the rest of his 'hocus-pocus' (theosophy, magic, astrology). Among those we may mention I. A. Richards who, already in 1924, had written of 'such pathetic spectacles as Mr Yeats trying desperately to believe in fairies'.¹⁸ We may also mention George Orwell who, in his otherwise perceptive essay on Yeats, spoke with contempt of the poet's interest in 'disembodied spirits', thus putting Yeats's investigation of spiritualistic phenomena in the same boat with 'reincarnation ... astrology and what not'.¹⁹

Perhaps the objections of quite a few writers are summed up in R. P. Blackmur's statement of 1957 that 'The supernatural is simply not part of our mental furniture', as 'fatalism, Christianity, and magic', let alone spiritualism, 'are none of them disciplines to which many minds can consciously appeal today ... for emotional strength and moral authority'.²⁰ Such a general objection may be perfectly acceptable on its own sociological or other grounds. Any of us can reject the 'supernaturalist' ideology which underlies a considerable part of Yeats's poetry, and the poems which are founded on it. Our attitude, however, would have to do with critical opinion rather than with scholarly research. Moreover, it would have very little to

do with the facts relating to Yeats's spiritualistic and psychical investigations, and would not take into account the specific character of the 'interlude'.

Critics who express their contempt for Yeats's 'dabbling' in spiritualism seem to believe that, after theosophy, magic, and other 'hocus-pocus', spiritualism took Yeats further away from the ideological and methodological mainstream of his time.²¹ They do not take notice of the fact that, as will be seen in this thesis, the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena (psychical research) gradually carried Yeats away from the 'convinced' spiritualists and towards the sceptical, open-minded school of researchers such as William James, towards method, precision, 'organized questioning',²² rather than towards 'mysticism and superstition'. Indeed, it was through the demands of 'scientific' psychical research that Yeats, as a 'researcher' and an Associate Member of the Society for Psychical Research from February 1913 on, acquired a tendency for 'exact and careful formulations' and 'an augmented ability to pursue subjects with more rigorous tenacity and logic',²³ 'a self-possession' (V, 8). It is significant that, as will be seen, these elements were inherited by his poetry from Responsibilities and afterwards.²⁴

Distaste for Yeats's involvement in spiritualism is by no means particular to Anglo-American criticism and culture. Indeed, it is not unusual among Continental writers, even among those who do not condemn Yeatsian 'occultism' in general. Maria Plakotari, a perceptive Yeats scholar in

Greek, and Fernando Picchi, a knowledgeable Italian Professor, offer us two characteristic examples.

In her essay on 'The Poetry of W. B. Yeats', Mrs Plakotari considers Yeats's occult interests to be a 'legitimate' way of satisfying 'a personal need'. Still, she regrets that 'Yeats wasted much energy, time, and grey matter' to support his 'faith' in spiritualism.²⁵ Mrs Plakotari typifies a critical tendency to forgive Yeats his other occult 'irregularities' but to frown upon spiritualism in order to 'protect' the poet's 'reputation'.²⁶ Moreover, despite the fact that she had the advantage of corresponding with Yeats, Plakotari typifies the critics who confuse spiritualism with theosophy and other of Yeats's occult and esoteric interests. It may suffice to say that she places his involvement in spiritualism at the time when he was still 'very young and immature',²⁷ before his involvement in the edition of Blake's works (1889-1893). It follows that such an approach to Yeats's spiritualistic interests can have little biographical or literary relevance.

Professor Ricchi, in his recent Esoterismo e Magia nelle Poesie di W. B. Yeats,²⁸ is more aware of the facts relating to Yeats's interest in spiritualism. Still, he minimizes the literary significance of the 'interlude' in favour of the poet's interest in Rosicrucianism and Golden Dawn magic. He does this even when he discusses 'Ego Dominus Tuus', a poem which, as will be seen in Chapter 6, is certainly related to Yeats's mediumistic encounters.

Joseph Hone belongs to the third category of writers,

those who approached the 'interlude' in a positive manner. In W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939²⁹ he gives a perceptive though somewhat inaccurate³⁰ account of Yeats's involvement in the world of mediums. Furthermore, he gives some interesting clues regarding the literary significance of the 'interlude', as when he refers to the spiritualistic source of the plot of Purgatory,³¹ or when he notes that the introduction of 'new devices for symbolising experience, new systems and new myths' into the poet's work 'was encouraged greatly by an encounter, while he was in Boston in 1911, with a very remarkable American medium'.³² Unfortunately, the clues offered by Hone are very few.

Richard Ellmann also belongs to the third category. Yeats: The Man and the Masks³³ is still one of the best works for students and scholars interested in the 'interlude'. Although Ellmann dedicates only twelve pages to Yeats's interests in spiritualism and psychical research,³⁴ he manages to include there some of the most crucial aspects of the subject, and illustrates the poet's new movement of imagination by few but major examples. Moreover, he gives what is still one of the most perceptive accounts of Yeats's encounter with the 'ghost' of Leo Africanus. It is true, however, that the unpublished material quoted by Ellmann is too limited to establish a meaningful relationship between the 'interlude' and the subsequent literary output. It is also true that Ellmann does not stress enough the literary relevance of Yeats's interest in mediumship, spiritualism, and psychical research.

The above are characteristic of the main critical attitudes towards the subject till 1975. In 1975 a group of critics, under the editorial guidance of George Mills Harper, dealt with Yeats's occult and esoteric interests, spiritualism included, in a direct manner. The result of this collective effort, Yeats and the Occult,³⁵ was a well-documented work in which two of Yeats's essays relating to his interests in spiritualism and psychical research were published for the first time ('Preliminary Examination of the Script of E[lizabeth] R[adcliffe]' and an untitled essay on the investigation of an alleged miracle at Mirebeau, France³⁶). Moreover, the volume contained essays by George Mills Harper, William M. Murphy, Stuart Hirschberg, Arnold Goldman and others who approached Yeats's involvement in spiritualism in various ways.

Without meaning to overlook the contribution of other writers in that volume, I will insist here on the significance of Professor Goldman's essay, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research',³⁷ as it is directly related to the subject of this thesis. Goldman complained about the neglect of the 'interlude':

Of W. B. Yeats's interests in the esoteric and the occult, his attachment to spiritualism and to its investigation by means of so-called psychical research has attracted the least attention (p. 108).

His complaint stemmed from his conviction that:

Far from being a closed episode which only the most devoted student of Yeats's esoteric interests should pursue ... Yeats's encounter with spiritualism and psychical research can bear sustained enquiry. It connects a number of his major interests and acts as a transforming

agent or catalyst, unifying our picture of the man and the poet (p. 128).

Goldman referred to the biographical and literary aspects of the neglect of the 'interlude', and went on to make concrete suggestions of how knowledge and understanding of it are crucial for a fuller appreciation of Yeats's literary strategies and procedures in some of his major poetic achievements. Moreover, he noted that, borrowing themes from spiritualism and psychical research, Yeats transformed the knowledge that came out of seance-rooms into poetic knowledge. Yeats, Goldman suggested, sometimes used the phenomena of trance-mediumship in an oblique manner, and 'imitated' the 'voice of trance' in his 'prophetic' and 'apocalyptic' poetic vision. In other instances, he thought, Yeats transfigured the usual scenarios of seances into the plots of poems such as 'An Image from a Past Life', 'The Second Coming', 'All Souls' Night' (pp. 126-27). But although Goldman's suggestions are, as I believe, valuable to reader and critic, some of his conclusions could be substantiated on the more solid basis of new and more convincing data — a fact of which he was very much aware. As he noted, in the conclusion of his essay,

Knowledge and analysis of the spiritualist episode is in fact only at the beginning: when more manuscripts and letters than have been hitherto available become known, they will enable the picture to be further developed and clarified... (pp. 128-29).

Goldman believed that this new data would prove his analysis of Yeats's poetry and poetics 'suggestive and useful' (p. 129). Indeed they have. In the years since

the publication of his essay, I have responded to his call for further investigation of the subject, and I have searched for the lacking evidence.

This evidence derives mostly from Yeats's unpublished records of seances and from other spiritualistic writings he kept in his files. But it also derives, if in a lesser degree, from his correspondence with William Thomas Horton, Elizabeth Radcliffe, Everard Feilding and others — Yeats's friends or acquaintances who were directly or indirectly concerned with the poet's interest in spiritualism and psychical research. As regards this correspondence, we are fortunate to have the editorial work of Richard J. Finneran, George Mills Harper and William M. Murphy to our aid, in two valuable editions which followed the publication of Goldman's essay — Letters to W. B. Yeats (1977) and W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship (1980).

Plan of the Thesis

To explore the relationship between Yeats's art and the 'spiritualist "interlude"' I have planned this thesis as follows:

Chapter 1 ('Yeats's Spiritualistic Papers') is a short presentation of Yeats's records of seances, and other spiritualistic writings he kept in his files. These documents are not fully described in this chapter, as my aim here is simply to give the reader general information as regards the original sources which I have used. For a

detailed description and annotation of the most important of these documents the reader can see Chapter 2 and the Appendices.

Chapter 2 ('Yeats as a "Spiritualist" and "Psychical Researcher"') is an account of Yeats's involvement in spiritualism and its investigation, an attempt to see Yeats's involvement in spiritualism and psychical research almost exclusively in the light of his unpublished papers. Although the aim of this thesis is literary rather than biographical, the borders between the 'literary' and the 'biographical' are often indefinable. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the various phases of Yeats's preoccupation with the 'otherwordly' and the 'paranormal', and, as such, it comes before any attempt to see their literary relevance.

Chapter 3 ('The Words upon the Window-pane as an Example') deals with Yeats's spiritualistic sources and their dramatic elaboration in this seance-play, his only work where he made direct use of a spiritualistic setting and of the typical personae who frequent seance-rooms. Although Yeats's other works are discussed in a chronological order, this play, written in 1930,³⁸ is given priority here, as it contains some major themes and motifs which pervade his art. This is Yeats's only play to which I have devoted a whole chapter, though plays such as The Resurrection and Purgatory are also connected with his interest in the 'paranormal'. The reason is that Yeats's unpublished papers have nothing to add as regards the interpretation of these works, whose spiritualistic aspects have been

discussed in Peter Ure's Yeats the Playwright,³⁹ as well as in Forman Brown's 'Mr Yeats and the Supernatural'.⁴⁰

In Chapter 4 ('Responsibilities: A First Attempt') a few of Yeats's poems, such as 'Introductory Rhymes', 'To a Shade', and 'The Cold Heaven', are considered in the context of his first and cautious attempts to introduce some major aspects of his spiritualistic and 'psychical' interests into his poetry. Here I discuss Yeats's preoccupation with death in relation to his 'role' as a 'psychical researcher' and his first attempts to use spiritualistic scenarios in his poetry by 'invoking' his 'old fathers' or dead 'tavern comrades' and by adopting the persona of a medium.

Chapter 5 ('The Wild Swans at Coole: Ghostly Presences') deals with Yeats's further attempts to 'invoke' his dead - 'Discoverers of forgotten truth / Or mere companions of my youth'. Poems such as 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' and 'In Memory of Alfred Pollexfen' are discussed here with reference to Yeats's spiritualistic interests.

Chapter 6 ('"Ego Dominus Tuus": Yeats, Leo Africanus, and the Process of Self-transformation') deals separately with 'Ego Dominus Tuus', another poem from The Wild Swans at Coole, in which Ille 'invokes' his 'double' or 'anti-self'. This chapter discusses the psychological and symbolic content of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' with reference to Yeats's encounter with his 'opposite', the 'ghost' of Leo Africanus, during his spiritualistic investigations. The discussion is based on Yeats's unpublished records where he describes

his first encounter with Leo and comments on his relationship with him, as well as on his formulation of the concept of the Daemon in Per Amica Silentia Lunae and elsewhere. Yeats's writings are considered here in connection with the Jungian concept of 'the process of psychic transformation' — the 'enlargement of personality' which comes as a result of the creative contact between man's ego-consciousness and the 'opposite' forces of his unconscious. 'Ego Dominus Tuus', Per Amica Silentia Lunae and some of Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic writings are seen as dramatizations of this process.

Chapters 7 and 8 ('Spiritualistic Scenarios in Michael Robartes and the Dancer' and 'From The Tower to Last Poems') examine Yeats's later and at times more direct use of themes, motifs, and 'central situations' particular to spiritualism and psychical research, such as : mediumship, trance-speaking, invocation of spirits, spiritualistic revelations, 'double' dreams, haunted houses, apparitions. Here, too, I make use of some basic concepts of Jungian psychology.

The last chapter is followed by a short Conclusion and four Appendices. Appendices A, B, and C contain Yeats material hitherto unpublished. Appendix A contains transcripts of Yeats's records of seances arranged in a chronological order. Appendix B is a transcript of the undated and important manuscript headed 'Leo Africanus', which, as I suggest in Chapter 1, must have been written sometime between July and October 1915. Appendix C contains extracts from 'The

Poet and the Actress' and the 'Clairvoyant Search for Will', two undated typescripts connected with Yeats's mediumistic encounters. Finally, Appendix D (The 'Notebook of Stainton Moses') contains extracts from the allegedly automatic script of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses — a well-known medium in circles of spiritualists and psychological researchers — which Yeats kept in his files. I do not know how this text came to be in Yeats's possession,⁴¹ but, as I will suggest, it may be related to the spiritualistic sources of some of his major poems.

With very few exceptions, these writings have no literary value in themselves. In the context of this thesis, their main interest lies in the fact that they present us with some spiritualistic sources of Yeats's art. However, their interest is also biographical, as they suggest the active involvement of Maud Gonne, Lady Gregory, Lennox Robinson and Sturge Moore in Yeats's psychical investigations.

N O T E S

1. See Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London 1949, second edition 1961), p. 196: 'Beginning seriously in 1909, and especially from 1911 on, Yeats's imagination was captured by a branch of supernaturalism of which up to that time he had known little: the phenomena of spiritualism.'

2. For example in Katharine Tynan, Twenty-five Years: Reminiscences (New York, 1913), and Geraldine Cummins, Unseen Adventures: An Autobiography covering Thirty-four Years of Work in Psychical Research (London, 1951).

3. In Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, collected and edited by J. P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (London, 1957).

4. For example in Ellmann, pp. 200-04.

5. See p. 12 below.

6. The date given in Virginia Moore, The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats' Search for Reality (New York, 1954), p. 221, is June 1908.

7. See Arnold Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 108-29 (p. 108).

8. Goldman, p. 108.

9. I am paraphrasing Moore's attempt 'to make Yeats' activities graphic': 'The seance-goer climbs shabby steps in Soho, knocks at a door, gives a false name, pays a shilling, and enters the seance room' (p. 220). 'Many people who knew Yeats during his years of psychical research ... became scornful, condescending, racked by pity, or just bored. Yeats was a fanatic, a fool: he believed in spooks!' (p. 222).

10. In The World of W. B. Yeats: Essays in Perspective, edited by R. Skelton and A. Saddlemeyer (Victoria, 1965), pp. 44-66.

11. See 'Yeats Recollected', Agenda, 12 (Summer 1974), 36-47 (pages 43 and 41).

12. (London, 1974).

13. See above, note 6.

14. See Goldman, pp. 108-09, and note 19 to page 116. See also note 16 below.

15. See her comment on 'A Memory of Youth' (p. 238). Further page references to The Unicorn are given in the text.

16. Had she not, she would have known that 'Report of Seance' (Appendix A: 1), one of Yeats's major spiritualistic papers, is dated May 9, 1912, not April 10, 1911, as she suggests on p. 225.

17. See above, note 9.

18. 'The Two Uses of Language' from The Principles of Literary Criticism, reprinted in 20th Century Literary Criticism, edited by David Lodge (London, 1972), pp. 111-14 (p. 111). Moreover, in 1927 Richards frowned upon 'resort to trance, and the effort to discover a new world-picture to replace that given by science'. See Kathleen Raine, 'Hades Wrapped in Cloud', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 80-107 (p. 81).

19. See 'W. B. Yeats' in his Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 2 vols (Harmondsworth and Middlesex, 1970), pp. 311-17 (p. 313).

20. 'The Later Poetry of W. B. Yeats', in W. B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology, edited by William H. Pritchard (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972), p. 189. Quoted in Raine, p. 81.

21. See also Raine, p. 81.

22. See Goldman, pages 113 and 122.

23. Goldman, p. 122.

24. See Goldman, p. 122, and my discussion of Responsibilities in Chapter 4.

25. Epoches, no. 32 (December 1965), 37-43 (p. 38).

26. See Raine, p. 81.

27. 'The Poetry of W. B. Yeats', p. 41.

28. (Firenze, 1977).

29. (London, 1942).

30. On Hone's account see Goldman, pp. 108-09.

31. See pp. 283-84 in that work.

32. See Hone, p. 281, and Chapter 2 (p. 55) below.

33. See above, note 1.

34. See Chapter 12 ('Spirits and Matter: Towards Harmony', pp. 196-206).

35. See above, note 7.

36. See pp. 130-189 in that work.

37. See pp. 108-29. Further page references to this essay are given after quotations in the text.

38. See Peter Ure's 'Brief Chronology', Yeats the Playwright: A Commentary on Character and Design in the Major Plays (London, 1963), p. 176.

39. See above, note 38.

40. Sewanee Review, 33, no. 3 (July 1925), 323-30.

41. See also George Mills Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 7-8.

C H A P T E R 1

YEATS'S SPIRITUALISTIC PAPERS

In the library of Senator Michael B. Yeats there are a number of W. B. Yeats's papers which the Senator has classified as 'occult'.¹ Among these there is a considerable body of material that is immediately connected with the poet's attachment to spiritualism and to its investigation. Thanks to the Senator's kind offer, these papers, as well as the rest of the Yeats papers in his possession, were transferred to microfilm some time ago, and the complete set of microfilms is now available at the National Library of Ireland.²

As I have already explained, Yeats's spiritualistic papers are indispensable to the present study and are often referred to in its course. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the reader to them and to suggest their literary relevance. Although it deals with unpublished papers, it also contains short references to related material which is available in print.

I have arranged Yeats's spiritualistic papers in five groups: (i) records of seances; (ii) Yeats's 'correspondence'

with the 'ghost' of Leo Africanus; (iii) essays; (iv) correspondence with friends and associates who were directly or indirectly connected with Yeats's spiritualistic interests; (v) writings by others which Yeats kept in his files.

(i) Records of Seances

During his career as a 'spiritualist' and 'psychical researcher', Yeats wrote numerous accounts of seances. Texts of this kind, or short references to his mediumistic encounters, can be found in his published works of general interest to Yeats students, such as his Letters or his Journal (Memoirs). For example, the 'inhibiting' letter to Florence Farr to which I referred in the Introduction may be regarded as a record of a seance in itself; and the Journal contains records of or references to seances.³

The following is a presentation of records which are included among Yeats's unpublished papers and were either kept in note-books intended for that purpose or typed and kept separately.

Among Yeats's unpublished papers I have found some twenty detailed records, the contents of which were too specific to appear in any diary for general use. Although, as will be seen, Yeats did not keep records of all the seances he attended but only of those he considered 'evidential', he took great care to arrange the records he did keep in a very systematic way and to provide in them all kinds of seemingly unnecessary details.⁴

Here I have classified Yeats's records of seances by

the year in which they were kept. These accounts were written between 1912, when he started the systematic recording of his mediumistic encounters, and 1916, when his interest in 'that popular spiritualism' lost its intensity.

— 1912 —

The first of Yeats's records in that year is titled 'Report of Seance' (Appendix A: 1) and marked 'First appearance of Leo' in his hand. This exists in a typescript of five pages signed 'W. B. Y.' and corrected by him. The seance was held at Cambridge House, Wimbledon, on May 9, with Mrs Etta Wriedt.⁵ It was in the course of this seance that the voice which claimed to belong to Leo Africanus, the writer, geographer and explorer of the sixteenth century — a familiar personage to the Yeats student⁶ — was first heard through 'a long tin trumpet'. As Yeats's encounter with 'Leo' had far-reaching effects on the development of his mind and imagination, his record of this seance is of primary importance in the context of this thesis. A full description of the content of Yeats's record is given in Chapter 2, and its literary significance is examined in Chapter 6.

Another record of 1912 exists in a manuscript titled 'Seance held at Cambridge House', dated June 5 and signed 'W. B. Yeats' on June 6 (Appendix A: 2).⁷ In it Yeats relates a new encounter with Leo Africanus, who claims that he has come to help him. Being directly related to the 'Leo Case', this document is as important as the previous one. Moreover, it is important because it gives us a first

Scene held at Cambridge House, Wembley - London
 7th June 5. 1912.
 Present hands: in medium leader D'A Waller & Wm. J. Galt

[illegible]

The black room contains a cabinet which
as did as was as it was a dark scene as large chairs
and a table in the room. The table is very large
and is very large.

Feb 4/10

1000

myself

17 18

Cabot.

□ modern
down

I would have liked time enough to make a map in my
detention^{house} in no prison. I think it would have been better
if we had more empty rooms & I have known exactly what
it contains before starting. Then things are, the ten minutes
on the table, the manipulation excludes conversation, juggling,

glimpse of Yeats as a 'psychical researcher'. Far from 'hanging upon the words of Nelly the control and Tulka the spirit guide',⁸ here Yeats considers the possibility of unconscious 'juggling', 'trance juggling perhaps', assumes the rôle of a psychical researcher when he notes that 'it would have been better it was an empty room and to have known exactly what was contained before starting', and gives a drawing of the arrangement of sitters and furniture in the seance-room. Another reason why this record is important is the coming of 'a sharp voice ... saying that it was Henry Irving' - a voice 'speaking in blank verse, Shakespeare I think in the Irving manner'. According to the records I have found, Henry Irving was the first 'literary' celebrity who 'visited' him from the 'other world'. As the reader will remember, Irving was an early idol of Yeats's whose 'heroic walk' in Hamlet and rhythmical manner of speaking he once took to imitating.⁹

In October 1912 Yeats was greatly interested in the work of a medium called Peters, 'a very nervous little man who is never still for a moment'. His interest in the mediumship of that little man was so great, that he had four seances with him in three consecutive days, even at the unlikely hour of 3 p.m.¹⁰ This interest is also indicated by the fact that Yeats took care to have the records of those seances typed.¹¹ The typescripts are thoroughly supervised by Yeats, if we exclude the usual spelling errors and faults in punctuation. The corrections in his hand, especially in the third record, suggest that he had in mind to

publish these documents sometime. It may be that, as he grew more acquainted with the world of psychical research, he realized that he added very little, if anything, to the existing data, or that his seances with Peters were 'not exactly evidential' from the researcher's point of view. In any case, it is fortunate that, by keeping these records, Yeats offered valuable data to researchers who are interested in his life and art.¹²

The first of these records, titled 'Seance with Peters' and dated '26th October, 1912' (Appendix A: 3) exists in a typescript of five pages and is signed 'WBY'. The seance described there appears to be an innocent 'metaphysical game' between 'fifteen or twenty people' who, including Yeats, 'put various objects on a tray' and expected the medium to find 'their original owners etc.' Yeats's note, which follows the record, is more interesting than that. This concerns the medium's host, 'a certain Irish poet called Cousens', who 'told me that his wife', an 'automatic writer',

got lately some Script from an influence which
professed never to have lived upon the earth,
to be much higher than a man, and to be in
command of millions of spirits

The 'influence', says Yeats, 'had come to get Cousens to write certain poems in interpretation of old Irish mythology', and it was important that this interpretation 'should be given currently in the world'. Moreover, the 'influence' gave Cousens two myths, 'which it declared were old myths which are now lost about certain Celtic Gods'. Yeats then refers to strange phenomena which accompanied the writing

of Cousens' poetry: 'On a perfectly still day', Cousens was walking by the edge of the sea and asking in his mind an old Irish sea god to help him in his writing. The poet then 'was suddenly drenched with sea water as if from a wave, though no wave was possible, and when he went indoors wrote a great number of lines' about the Irish sea god 'with extraordinary rapidity'. Cousens impressed Yeats 'as accurate and truthful', although, as he concluded, 'I do not know him very well'. I believe that the note to the 'Seance with Peters' is important, as it connects two of Yeats's major interests, poetry and Irish folk-lore, with spiritualism. Moreover, it seems to support Arnold Goldman's view that the 'spiritualist interlude' is 'far from being a closed episode', as it suggests a continuity between the 'interlude', Mrs Yeats's automatic writing, and the poetry which is directly connected with the Vision material. It may be that, after Mrs Yeats 'surprised' her husband 'by attempting automatic writing', Yeats had in his mind, among other things, the example of Cousens and his wife, and thus 'persuaded her to give an hour or two day after day to the unknown writer' (V, 8). If some invisible presence had 'influenced' the writings of Cousens, whom Yeats describes in his note as 'not a good poet', the 'other²world⁶' might also influence the work of a much better poet such as himself.

The 'Second Seance [with] Peters', dated October 27 (Appendix A: 4), exists in a typescript of three pages and is also signed 'WBY'. On the whole, this record is much more illuminating than the previous one. This time Yeats visited Peters alone and, perhaps being a little 'jealous'

of Cousens, asked the medium 'if he could get my "guides"'. Peters described three of them, and Yeats recognized 'all these three personalities as representing states of mind which influenced my poetry or my criticism'. One of these 'guides' was more interesting than the others. This was 'a lyric poet ... also a painter' who 'had lived a tragic life without recognition' but 'was better known since his death'. He 'had written prose as well as verse, but the prose though logical, had been unintelligible'. Moreover, he was 'most excitable, thinking and speaking rapidly, unable to express all he had to say'. Yeats saw that such a 'guide' 'could be nobody but William Blake', and, though he gave no clue, the medium presented him with more convincing details. The spirit's talent, said Peters, was not dramatic but 'purely lyrical'; he had influenced Yeats's 'early life', but even if he was 'in the background now, he could come forward again'. When Yeats asked Peters if he knew anything of Blake, on whom he had written 'a big book', the medium assured him that he knew nothing, 'except what he got from the reading many years ago of some of his poems, in the Canterbury poets'. Yeats was greatly impressed by the medium's description of Blake, and noted Peters' insistence on the excitability of the man as if this had been a cause of his practical failure'. This, he thought, 'would have needed a deeper knowledge' of Blake's life than Peters could get 'from any book of selection'.

On the same day, Yeats had another seance with Peters. The record of this exists in an unsigned typescript of five and a half pages with corrections in Yeats's hand

('3rd Seance with Peters', Appendix A: 5). This time the seance was held in the presence of Maud Gonne and others. The medium said that he saw a man who had come for Maud Gonne and went on to describe him. Yeats thought that man may have been her father. She was not convinced by the description, but was impressed by a detail connected with the way her father limped: 'he hated to be seen limp [ing] and it was only when he was tired that he did it'. In the next 'visitor' Yeats 'suddenly recognized John Synge but said nothing'. Synge 'want [ed] to say that we do survive death, that your dreams are even truer than you think'. If we exclude the usual routine of seance rooms (description of dead relatives et c.) and 'John Synge's' appearance, the sitting was dominated by Maud Gonne. 'Moonstone', Peters' control, addressed her and said that she had had a very busy life: 'She had been a whirlwind and had lived in a whirlwind'. She 'had great power over men and women', but 'she had met with a lot of ingratitude'. Now her 'idealism had gone, and there were facts now, a deeper foundation'. 'Moonstone' said more about Maud Gonne's life which, 'although true enough', she was 'too proud to admit'. Yeats was impressed by this account of Gonne's life, as well as by its wording.¹³ He was also impressed by the poetic style of one of Peters' statements about a dead man: 'he died like a candle blown out - there was a red wick'. Yeats kept this in his mind and recorded it afterwards.

Three days after (October 30), Yeats had another sitting with Peters, this time alone. His record of this

sitting ('Peters' Seance', Appendix A: 6) exists in an unsigned typescript of four and a half pages with only one correction in his hand. Yeats met Peters after having 'got into an argument of a semi-political sort' with Maud Gonne. The seance turned out to be connected with politics. This time the 'visitor' who was 'hanging about' was Charles Stuart Parnell. 'Moonstone' said that Parnell, who 'had made a mess of his life', now wanted to explain a symbol of three dogs: 'the red dog was hatred against his nation, the black dog was the worst, indifference within', and 'the white dog was hypocrisy of two sections of the Christian church'.¹⁴ Parnell 'fought all', but 'all the dogs were at him'. The 'presence' of the Irish leader dominated the seance, and the rest was an anticlimax. I cannot stress enough the literary relevance of this seance here; it should be obvious to readers who are familiar with Parnell's presence in Yeats's poetry, as, for example, in 'To a Shade', which is discussed in Chapter 4 of the present thesis.

— 1913 —

The first of the seances Yeats recorded in that year was held on May 12. On that occasion he was alone with his favourite medium, Mrs Wriedt. Leo's voice was heard once more, and Mrs Wriedt 'got a confused message'.

After a short note on one of the appearances of 'Dr Sharp', Mrs Wriedt's chief control, who claimed he was born in Glasgow and had emigrated to the U. S., where he died,¹⁵ there follows another record of a seance, again

with Mrs Wriedt. During this seance, which was held on June 24 and recorded on July 6, Leo reappeared and asked Yeats 'if I was satisfied with what I was doing now'. The fact that in a parenthesis Yeats gives information about his occupation at the time may suggest that, despite his impossible handwriting, he had in mind some future readers of his records. Leo did not stay for long and was followed by Mrs Wriedt's routine: 'some strange tongue was heard', as the new 'visitor' 'did not know English'.

Another seance with Mrs Wriedt was held on June 28 (date of Yeats's record: June 29). This time a number of sitters were present, and Yeats, being suspicious as a researcher should be, took care to make a drawing representing the arrangement of sitters and furniture in the room. It seems that this was not a very 'evidential' seance. 'Cardinal Newman', the 'spirit' who frequented Mrs Wriedt's seances and sometimes gave benedictions in Latin¹⁶ appeared, as well as 'John King', one of the medium's controls, who claimed to be the Welsh pirate Sir Henry Morgan.¹⁷ More interesting than the record itself are Yeats's notes to it. There he assumes the role of the psychical researcher again: he makes drawings of the trumpets through which the voices seemed to come, and notes his 'difficulty in knowing where the voices came [come?] from'. As will be seen in the following chapter, Yeats suspected ventriloquism on the medium's part.

— 1914 —

This was a busy year for Yeats the 'researcher'. On his way to Mirebeau, France, where he was to investigate an

alleged miracle,¹⁸ he visited Madame Bisson in Paris and reported ectoplasmic phenomena.¹⁹ Yeats had six seances at Bisson's but he recorded only three of them, as the rest 'were failures'. These seances were held on May 19, 23 and 26. The first and most illuminating of these records, titled 'Seances at Madame Bisson's' (Appendix A: 7) exists in a signed typescript of some four pages. After a short description of the first three seances, it deals almost exclusively with ectoplasmic manifestations. What is most impressive about it is again Yeats's attitude: he seems perfectly detached and takes note of the most minute and seemingly unnecessary details.²⁰ The two other records (titled 'Fifth Seance at Madame Bisson's' and 'Seance at Madame Bisson's') also deal with manifestations of luminous forms.

After his return to Britain, Yeats had another sitting with Mrs Wriedt on June 6 ('Seance at Cambridge House'). Yeats took notes in the dark and recorded the seance on the following day. Once more there were a number of sitters present, and once more he made a drawing representing the arrangement of sitters and furniture in the room. On that occasion Yeats was touched by someone who then spoke and said he was Leo. Leo did not stay for long; some more voices were heard; and 'then came someone who called herself my mother'. From the way in which Yeats presents the appearance of his 'mother', as well as from the notes which follow his record, it seems that he was not convinced of her identity.²¹ Towards the end of the seance Leo reappeared and Yeats asked him for information about 'Miss X', that is, Elizabeth Radcliffe, a young automatic writer in whose

scripts the poet was greatly interested.²²

— 1915 —

The first record of that year, an untitled and unsigned typescript of two and a half pages with corrections in Yeats's hand, is of a seance held on May 7 (Appendix A: 8). This record is connected with what has been called the 'Hugh Lane Case'.²³ Sir Hugh Lane, Lady Gregory's nephew, had gone down on the Lusitania. Subsequently, Hester Dowden, daughter of Professor Edward Dowden, and the Irish playwright Lennox Robinson obtained 'communication' with his spirit through experiments on the ouija-board,²⁴ without knowing that he was on the liner. The first words spelt out on the ouija-board were 'Pray for Hugh Lane', and then followed details about the sinking which purported to come from Hugh Lane. As Yeats was not present at that seance, it seems that he based his report on an existing transcription, or that the document in question is a copy of the original transcription, in which Yeats added his comments on the truthfulness of 'Hugh Lane's' statements.²⁵

On July 8 Yeats had a sitting with a Mrs Harris. His record of it is the first instance where he seems perfectly aware of the ludicrous aspects of seances. The 'Seance with Mrs Harris' (typescript) is a delightfully ironic piece of writing — a description of typical seance-goers rather than of mediumistic phenomena. Indeed, it is Yeats's only record of a seance that has some literary value in itself. As this record is discussed in connection with The Words upon the Window-pane (Chapter 3), I will not give more information

about it here. The entire record is transcribed in Appendix A: 9.

Yeats's next record in 1915 is of a seance held on July 20 (untitled manuscript; Appendix A: 10). The medium was Mrs Wriedt again. This seance must have been of special interest to Yeats, as in its course he 'communicated' with what claimed to be the spirit of George Pollexfen, 'the astrologer', who assured him that 'he was very happy' and that the 'magical work' they had done together had helped him after his death. 'Hugh Lane' appeared too, and said he wished Lady Gregory 'would give him a chance of speaking to her'. Then came Leo, with whom Yeats 'talked of theatre'.

A short record of a seance held on July 22 (untitled manuscript; Appendix A: 11) is more significant than the previous one. In the course of that seance, and in the presence of Sturge Moore, Leo reappeared through another medium, a 'Miss' or 'Mrs S—' and said things that were to prove decisive for the development of Yeats's mind and imagination. Leo asserted that he was not the medium's 'secondary personality'²⁶ but 'the person he claimed to be', and then he explained the reasons for which he was 'drawn' to Yeats. In life, Leo had been 'impulsive' and all that his 'Africa[n] image suggested symbolically', while Yeats was 'conscientious and timid'. If associated with Leo, his antithesis, Yeats 'would have perfected Nature'. Leo asked Yeats 'to write him a letter addressed to him', in which the poet should express 'all my doubts about spiritual things and then to write a reply as from him to me'. Leo

would 'conduct' Yeats 'in that reply and thus it would be really from him'.

This short record has never been mentioned by commentators on the 'Leo Case'.²⁷ Yet it is very important, not only in itself but also because it allows us to suggest an approximate date of the subsequent 'correspondence' between Yeats and Leo, which exists in a manuscript headed 'Leo Africanus'. It appears that the latter document, about the date of which commentators are silent, was written after August 12, 1915, when the seance was recorded, or, in any case, after July 22, when it was held. If we accept that, as Ellmann suggests,²⁸ 'Ego Dominus Tuus' was composed after the 'Leo Africanus' manuscript, it seems that 'Leo Africanus' was written between July 22 or August 12 and October 5.²⁹ Considering that, as Ellmann, Moore, and Goldman agree,³⁰ 'Ego Dominus Tuus' is immediately related to Yeats's 'correspondence' with Leo, the dating of the relevant manuscript suggests how quick Yeats was to incorporate his spiritualistic interests into his poetry.

Yeats's next record of a seance (untitled manuscript; Appendix A: 12) is also signed on August 12, and deals with a sitting at which he was not present. 'On Sunday, July 25, Lady Gregory had a seance with Mrs Wriedt She asked me not to come.' Lady Gregory's visit to Mrs Wriedt was her response to 'Hugh Lane's' expressed wish, on July 20, that his aunt 'would give him a chance of speaking to her'. Of course, after the sitting Lady Gregory related to Yeats what had happened during it. 'Hugh Lane' had come and had upset her because, 'when she asked how he was he said "It

is awful". Still, he added, 'he would be all right when his affairs would be "straightened [?] out"'.³¹ These 'affairs' were connected with his will, in which he had left a collection of French Impressionist paintings to the National Gallery, London. Many people believed, however, that he had made a second will, leaving the collection to Dublin.³² After many efforts, an unwitnessed codicil was found, which gave the pictures back to Dublin. Although this codicil was not legal, Lady Gregory believed that it could be carried into effect.³³ In the course of her seance with Mrs Wriedt, 'Hugh Lane' 'spoke of the codicil and was glad we had it'.

— 1916 —

Yeats's only record of a seance in 1916 is an unsigned typescript of twenty-two pages with corrections and notes in his hand. This document, titled 'Sitting with Mrs Leonard',³⁴ and dated December 27 (Appendix A: 13), is also connected with the search for Hugh Lane's second will. The 'Sitting with Mrs Leonard' is a dialogue between Yeats and 'Feda', the medium's control. After some unsuccessful attempts to make Yeats recognize some of his 'guides', one of whom bears a vague resemblance to Leo Africanus, 'Feda' gives a convincing description of a man who when passing on 'had a sudden choking sensation' and who is recognized by Yeats as Hugh Lane. 'Feda' then mentions a 'brown leather case' in which a legal codicil may be found. 'Hugh Lane', however, thinks that the unwitnessed codicil 'will do', and

promises to help Yeats in every possible way.

(ii) 'Correspondence' with Leo Africanus (MS headed 'Leo Africanus'))

Yeats's 'correspondence' with Leo exists in a manuscript of forty pages. Pages one to twelve are Yeats's 'letter' to Leo; pages thirteen to thirty-eight are Leo's 'reply'; and pages thirty-nine to forty are Yeats's 'postscript'. The first twelve pages contain also a description of seances connected with Leo's 'communication' with Yeats. I will not present this very important document here, as it is fully described in the following chapter. The reader will find a transcript of almost the entire manuscript in Appendix B.

(iii) Essays

As I said in the Introduction, two of Yeats's essays connected with his interest in spiritualism and psychical research were published in Yeats and the Occult.³⁵ The 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E[li]zabeth R[adcliffe]',³⁶ and the untitled essay on the investigation of an alleged miracle at Mirebeau are thus added to 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places' and to the relevant material which is readily available. Therefore, I will not present their contents here. However, I will make use of the interesting data they offer us in my discussion of Yeats as a 'spiritualist' and 'psychical researcher' (Chapter 2) and elsewhere in this thesis.

Of Yeats's essays connected with his spiritualistic

interests, two have not been published: 'The Poet and the Actress' (Appendix C: 1) and the 'Clairvoyant Search for Will' (Appendix C: 2).

'The Poet and the Actress'

This exists in an unsigned and undated typescript of twelve and a half pages with numerous corrections and revisions in Yeats's hand. It is an essay on drama, written in the form of a dialogue between a poet who is in favour of 'a revolt against mimicry, realism, the mere copying of the surface of life' on stage, and an actress who is in favour of realistic theatre and has 'always tried to be as real as possible in [her] acting'. The poet tries to persuade the actress to 'get away from reality', to abandon Ibsen, Shaw, and 'those plays of the new scientific kind', and to express a phantasmagoria of 'the life-long contest' between 'dream and its antagonist'. The purpose of great drama is to present this contest in which 'one of the antagonists does not wear a shape known to the world or speak a mortal tongue'. The actress herself will become a living expression of this contest if she wears a mask that the poet has brought 'from the city of Fez' — a mask made for her 'by the artists modelling in continual consultation' with the poets of that city.

Of course, this very short description of 'The Poet and the Actress' does not justify its classification as one of Yeats's 'spiritualistic papers'. Still, as Ellmann has suggested,³⁷ and as we shall see later in this thesis, the above text is immediately related to Yeats's discourse

The Poet.

You will acknowledge at once that bad poets and ~~bad~~ ^{the} bad musicians and bad novelists are full of charming illusions. They are like statesmen and founders of great businesses, perpetually deceiving themselves and others. They are in fact men of action, and all men of action are kept from contemplation by an egregious belief in life. They believe in ^{hallucinations} ~~newspapers~~, in love, in money, in progress, and ^{if they are} ~~in the~~ single ~~to~~ ^{inland nationalization} ~~the~~ millennium. They have an ^{immense} ~~enormous~~ popularity, but everywhere the poet in his way, and the realist in his way, is their enemy. The realist shows the pain they are trying to forget, and the tragic poet shows the pain side by side with the ecstasy, and in this perpetual fermentation of their happiness, they turn from the realist with terror, and refuse to the tragic artist even the pain that is the price of ^{his} ~~ecstasy~~ ^{with emotional}. If the poet ~~could~~ ^{would} not endure ^{the} ~~vision~~ ^{vision} created by his intellect long enough to attain to certainty. He must not feel that the intellect has shown him reality. He must be able to see reality without flinching.

The Actress.

The realist should therefore help to bring the Theatre of Beauty - which I confess I desire as much as you do.

The Poet.

Yes - for a hundred years we have had the rose pink sentimentalist created by the press of the linen drapers, and ^{by} ~~a~~ a priesthood that the linen drapers pay for. All painful things have been hidden and now the reaction has come. There is a passion for reality all through Europe. The religious men created a false faith and they have lost the world, and the popular writers have created a false

with his 'opposite', Leo Africanus, the 'Spanish Moor' from Fez.³⁸ We have seen that, at the seance of July 22, 1915, Leo said that, if associated with him, Yeats 'would have perfected Nature'. Similarly, if the actress covered her face with the mask which was made for her at Fez, and which symbolized dramatic values opposite to those she defended by her acting, she would have perfected her art. The main idea of a creative encounter with one's opposite is common to the seance of July 22, 1915, to the 'Leo Africanus' manuscript, and to 'The Poet and the Actress'.

'The Poet and the Actress' is a very important document, not only because of its intrinsic literary merit, but also because it connects the interests of Yeats the dramatist and 'spiritualist'. Moreover, as will be seen in Chapter 6, it is immediately connected with his poetry — especially with 'Ego Dominus Tuus', of which it sometimes seems like a draft in prose. In view of the above, it is a pity that this dialogue was not published when Yeats was alive, or after his death. His numerous revisions and corrections of the typescript — even corrections of spelling errors — suggest that he intended to have this text published.

As regards the time when 'The Poet and the Actress' was written, we have Ellmann's suggestion: 'about 1915 or 1916'.³⁹ Considering that the dialogue is immediately connected with the 'Leo Africanus' manuscript, as well as with 'Ego Dominus Tuus', we may suppose that it was written between July 22 and October 5, 1915 — that is, between the time when Leo proposed a closer association with Yeats and the time when 'Ego Dominus Tuus' was composed.

'Clairvoyant Search for Will'

This exists in an unsigned and undated typescript of twelve and a half pages with very few corrections in Yeats's hand, and is concerned with Hugh Lane's will.⁴⁰ Lady Gregory, when alone in a room of Linsday House, had asked her nephew's spirit to 'reveal to her' where the second will could be found. Suddenly she thought that she could find it in Hugh Lane's desk in the Dublin National Gallery. After corresponding with Dublin to have a search made, she received the unwitnessed codicil to which I have referred and which was indeed found where she had thought. Despite Lady Gregory's belief that, as no opposition was likely from private legatees or from the English National Gallery, this codicil could be carried into effect, she asked Yeats to find 'by psychic means' if 'a more detailed and binding will had been made'. Thus Yeats was 'engaged on that investigation'. To achieve his aim, he consulted not only 'Feda', the principal control of the famous Mrs Osborne Leonard, but also Miss Elizabeth Radcliffe, the young automatic writer, Mrs Cannock, of the London Spiritualists Alliance, and a Mrs Herbine.

Indeed, the 'Clairvoyant Search' is the record of such mediumistic encounters and consultations. As such, it seems irrelevant to Yeats's art. Still, there are other aspects of this essay which are important in the context of the present thesis. For example, the 'Clairvoyant Search' suggests to the reader who is interested in the persistent presence of the dead or of ghosts in Yeats's work how he was followed by 'spirits' in his life. As Mrs Cannock told him when he met her for the first time at the rooms of the

London Spiritualists Alliance,

A drowned man has come ... with you, he wishes to speak to you, he has wished for some days to do so His death brought some work or business to an end, it has brought many people to a stop.

Of course, the question of whether Mrs Cannock was a very good medium or very well informed⁴¹ about Yeats's search for Hugh Lane's will is not of vital importance in the context of this thesis.

(iv) Correspondence with Friends and Associates

As I explained in the Introduction, a considerable number of letters connected with Yeats's spiritualistic interests are now available in Letters to W. B. Yeats and W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship. Together with the poet's letters in Allan Wade's Letters of W. B. Yeats and elsewhere, these volumes present us with a satisfactory picture of the 'interlude' as far as correspondence is concerned.

(v) Writings by Others

Apart from Yeats's own writings, his 'occult' files contain writings by a philosopher and a crackpot who were also interested in mediumship, spiritualism, and their investigation in different ways: Henri Bergson, and the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, vehicle of 'paranormal' or 'supernormal' forces, automatic writer, and first editor of the spiritualist periodical Light.⁴²

Henri Bergson's 'Presidential Address' to the SPR

Students of Yeats's occult and esoteric interests are familiar with Bergson's indirect connection with them through the marriage between his sister Moina and MacGregor Mathers in 1890.⁴³ Later, however, Bergson was directly connected with psychical investigations similar to those which occupied Yeats's mind and imagination. In 1913 he was President of the Society for Psychical Research, and in 1915 his 'Presidential Address' was published in the Proceedings of that Society.⁴⁴ Among Yeats's papers there exists a manuscript copy of this Address, which was probably translated in 1913 by some friend of Yeats's.⁴⁵ Being a 'reasoned defense' of psychical research, Bergson's arguments must have been very convincing to Yeats.⁴⁶

The 'Note-book of Stainton Moses'

This is a typescript of more than two hundred pages found in an envelope marked 'Moses (Stainton) Script' and 'Notebook of Stainton Moses (1873)' in other than Yeats's hand (Appendix D). As I noted in the Introduction, I do not know how this typescript came to be in Yeats's possession. It may be that, as Moses was a member of the Theosophical Society, he met Yeats there and asked him to read it, perhaps because he was considering the prospect of a publication.⁴⁷

The Rev. William Stainton Moses was a conscientious and hard-working clergyman and schoolmaster. After his career at Oxford was interrupted by various illnesses,

'occurrences that appeared to contravene the accepted laws governing physical matter' (e.g., 'the movement of objects without mechanical or muscular force') were associated with him.⁴⁸ 'Physical phenomena' of this kind continued till 1881. In 1873 (the date of the typescript in Yeats's possession) he developed and exercised 'automatic writing'.⁴⁹ Moses claimed that he was controlled by a group of spirits, the so-called 'Imperator Band', who communicated with him under the pseudonyms of 'Imperator Servus Dei', head of the group, 'Rector', 'Doctor', 'Philosophus', and 'Prudens'. These spirits, who sometimes identified themselves as the Prophet Malachi, the stoic philosopher Athenodorus, John Dee, and other historical or biblical personages, gave him 'instructions in religion and philosophy'.⁵⁰ But their mission was more important than that. The 'Imperator Band' had come to warn man of world catastrophe: a 'bitter struggle' was at hand, and it was the natural companion of the crisis of modern civilization.⁵¹ The 'Note-book of Stainton Moses' is the record of this 'new revelation'.

I was not the first to discover the Moses Script or to comment on it. In August 1969 George Mills Harper and Kathleen Raine met Senator Michael Yeats in Dublin at his invitation to examine his father's occult papers.⁵² Some six years after, Harper described this text as a 'long, rambling, often tedious account of mediums, controls, and automatic experiences', whose 'primary value to us is the light it sheds on Yeats's interests and experiments at the beginning of his occult life'.⁵³ The 'Note-book' is, indeed, rambling and tedious, but, with all due respect to

Professor Harper's scholarship, I do not agree as regards 'its primary value for us'. Perhaps carried away by the date of the Moses Script, Harper did not consider that, as I noted in the Introduction, it may have for us a literary relevance that goes beyond Yeats's early occult interests (which were theosophy and magic rather than spiritualism and automatic writing). As I will suggest later in this thesis, some of Yeats's mature works appear to be influenced by the 'cataclysmic notions' of Moses' 'Imperator Band'. Again, I was not the first to consider the possible literary relevance of the 'Note-book'. Professor Arnold Goldman drew my attention to it some years ago, when he said that 'the Imperator Band deserves a separate study' in the context of Yeats's spiritualistic interests, and made concrete suggestions in this direction.⁵⁴

The papers examined in this chapter indicate that Yeats's attachment to spiritualism and to its investigation connects some of his major interests as a man, a poet, a dramatist, a scholar, an Irishman, and as a thinker in search of a 'system' or a 'new revelation'. The following is a list of these interests with reference to the often characteristic names with which they are connected in these papers.

- Personal interests: Henry Irving, John Synge, Hugh Lane, George Pollexfen, Susan Yeats, Lady Gregory, Maud Gonne.
- Political interests: Parnell, Maud Gonne.
- Poetic and dramatic interests: William Blake, Henry Irving,

Leo Africanus.

- Scholarly interests: William Blake.
- Ireland: Hugh Lane (collection of paintings), Parnell.
- Irish folk-lore: Cousens.
- The search for a 'system' or a 'new revelation' by means of automatic writing: Cousens, Stainton Moses.

Of course, in the context of Yeats's art, the above interests overlap and can all be regarded as literary.

N O T E S

1. See also George Mills Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), p. 1.

2. As the Senator informed me by his letter of October 27, 1980.

3. See pages 264-65, 266, and 268.

4. Such as the exact time when a sitting started, the number of sitters present and sometimes their names.

5. According to Yeats's 'Report of Seance', this is the correct date of the sitting, not April 10, 1911, the date given by Virginia Moore in The Unicorn (New York, 1954), p. 225. It seems that Moore followed the text now published as Yeats's Journal (in Memoirs), where there exists a short version of the 'Report of Seance' (pp. 264-65) dated April 10. In that version, however, the year is not given. I do not know how Moore decided that it was 1911. Denis Donoghue in note 2 to page 264 of Memoirs also accepts that May 9 is the correct date. As regards the date of this sitting, see also Arnold Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, note 16 to page 115.

6. Of course, every Yeats student has read accounts of the poet's encounter with 'Leo Africanus' in Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London, 1949, second edition 1961), pp. 198-200, Joseph Hone, W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939 (London, 1942), p. 282, and Virginia Moore, The Unicorn, pp. 225-26.

7. Moore (p. 226) refers to a sitting which Yeats had 'with a Mrs Stewart' before the seance of June 5 with Mrs Wriedt, on May 24, 1912. I have not been able to locate the record of this seance among Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic papers.

8. See Moore, p. 218.

9. See Ellmann, pp. 28-29: 'At the Erasmus Smith High School in Dublin, which he attended from his sixteenth to his eighteenth year (from October 1881 to December 1883), he concealed his timidity by arrogance He wore a Byronic tie and took to imitating the heroic walk which, in 1879, he and his father had seen Irving use in Hamlet. Perhaps in a further attempt to imitate Irving he developed the curiously rhythmical manner of speaking which is so difficult for those who tell stories about him to reproduce.'

10. 'Unlikely hour' according to what we accept as

regards the time when seances are held. Anyhow, no hour was 'unlikely' for Yeats the seance-goer.

11. The fact that he wanted to have this material typed suggests that he considered it of special interest.

12. 'Conscious of his role as prophet and seer', Yeats preserved all his occult papers and 'was careful not to destroy anything - of friends and associates as well as his own - which might illuminate his life and art.' (Harper, p. 2.)

13. Or, at least, this was my impression from the reading of the text. 'Moonstone's' metaphorical way of speaking ('She had been a whirlwind and had lived in a whirlwind') must have impressed Yeats, and thus he took down what seem to be the control's exact words.

14. In his record Yeats notes that 'Moonstone speaks as a pagan'. This should explain why the control spoke of two sections of the Christian church.

15. About 'Dr Sharp' see W. Usborne Moore, Glimpses of the Next State: The Education of an Agnostic (London, 1911), p. 287, and Goldman, p. 115.

16. About 'Cardinal Newman' see also W. Usborne Moore, p. 411.

17. 'The famous buccaneer of the time of Charles II'. (See W. Usborne Moore, p. xv.) About 'John King' as one of Mrs Wriedt's chief controls see also Goldman, p. 115, and the 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E. R.' in Yeats and the Occult, note 38 to pp. 150-51.

18. See below, Chapter 2, section titled 'The Alleged Miracle at Mirebeau'.

19. See also George Mills Harper and Kelly's Introduction to the 'Preliminary Examination', p. 137. Here I should note that Virginia Moore (pp. 231-32) refers to a seance with Mrs Wriedt held in February 1914, that is before Yeats's visit to Madame Bisson in May of that year. I have not found a record of this seance among Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic papers. It is worth mentioning that Virginia Moore gives the impression that on this occasion 'what professed to be John Synge' appeared to Yeats for the first time. As we have seen in the present chapter, 'John Synge' had already visited Yeats on October 27, 1912 ('3rd Seance with Peters').

20. Such as the exact time of every single event in the course of a seance. See also note 4 above. As regards the details of Yeats's attitude as a 'researcher', see below, Chapter 2.

21. Yeats's wording ('someone who called herself my mother')

is indicative of this disbelief, if we consider the instances where he seems absolutely certain about the identity of a certain 'visitor' from the 'other world'.

22. About Yeats's interest in Miss Elizabeth Radcliffe, see below, Chapter 2, section titled 'The Radcliffe Experiments'.

23. About the 'Hugh Lane Case' see Geraldine Cummins, Unseen Adventures: An Autobiography covering Thirty-four Years of Work in Psychical Research (London, 1951), pp. 24-25.

24. This is 'a sheet of cardboard on which the letters of the alphabet are printed. The automatist's fingers rest on a small heart-shaped piece of polished wood called a "traveller" or "pointer". This "traveller" glides lightly over the cardboard pointing to the letters spelling out messages.' (Cummins, p. 20.)

25. See Cummins' account of that seance, p. 24. The sitting was recorded by the Rev. Savell Hicks, whose name appears in Appendix A: 8.

26. That is, a 'split-off' of the medium's personality: a medium's 'control' translated into psychological terms. (See also Cummins, pp. 23-24, with reference to the 'controls' of Hester Dowden.)

27. For example, Ellmann (pp. 198-200) draws his information from the manuscript of Yeats's subsequent 'correspondence' with Leo (MS headed 'Leo Africanus'), where there are references to the seance of July 22. The same applies to Moore, The Unicorn, pages 225 and 236-37.

28. See pp. 200-01.

29. According to Ellmann's 'reasonably accurate' list ('A Chronology of the Composition of the Poems') in The Identity of Yeats (London, 1954, second edition 1964), p. 290.

30. See Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, pp. 200-01, Virginia Moore, p. 237, and Goldman, p. 126.

31. Yeats's 'Sitting with Mrs Leonard' of December 27 (Appendix A: 13) contains some more details of this seance.

32. In Yeats's unpublished paper titled 'Clairvoyant Search for Will' (Appendix C: 2) we read that Hugh Lane 'spoke to several people before his last voyage of another will, mentioned alterations which he meant to make and the executors he would appoint'.

33. This information is also from the 'Clairvoyant Search for Will'.

34. Mrs Osborne Leonard was a famous medium, whose place is now certain in the history of psychical research. At the time when Yeats visited her, she was supervised by the Society for Psychical Research. For a valuable source of information about the mediumship of Mrs Leonard, see W. H. Salter, Trance Mediumship: An Introductory Study of Mrs Piper and Mrs Leonard (London, 1950), pp. 23-32.

35. See above, Introduction, page 12.

36. It should be noted that, apart from the 'Preliminary Examination', Yeats also preserved records of experiments upon which he based his essay. (See George Mills Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, p. 7.) As regards the Yeats material upon which the essay is based, see also Denis Donoghue, Memoirs, note 3 to p. 266: Donoghue refers to 'Yeats's 1912 notes book [sic], a present from Maud Gonne at Christmas 1912', in which 'ER, a young woman gifted in automatic writing, is described.'

37. Yeats: The Man and the Masks, pp. 202-03.

38. Leo Africanus was probably born at Granada but he was mainly educated at Fez. For more information about Leo see below, Chapter 2, section titled 'The Leo Case'.

39. Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 202.

40. Again, the fact that Yeats took care to have his essay typed suggests his interest in the subject. This interest is also suggested by his radio broadcast about the unwitnessed codicil and the prospect of the return of the pictures to Ireland, as well as by his letter to the editor of the Observer, published on January 21, 1917 (Letters, 616-26). (About the broadcast see also Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, p. 8.)

41. In the 'Clairvoyant Search for Will' (Appendix C: 2) we read that Yeats 'went to the rooms of the London Spiritualists Alliance and asked the editor of "Light" and another friend to recommend me a medium. They told me that Mrs Cannock was to give clairvoyant descriptions at the Alliance that afternoon. I came back to the Alliance at about five minutes to three, the clairvoyant descriptions were to begin at three.' Of course, as Yeats does not give the time of his first visit to the Alliance, we cannot know if, in the meantime, Mrs Cannock was not informed about his vivid interest in the 'Hugh Lane Case', either by his 'friend' or by others.

42. About Stainton Moses see also Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', note 20 to p. 7: 'A close friend of ... Madame Blavatsky, and others, Moses was prominent in occult circles. He joined the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia on December 17, 1877, the same day as Robert Palmer Thomas, who later became a close associate of Yeats in the Golden Dawn.'

43. See George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn (London, 1974), p. 12, and my W. B. Yeats, Mythologies and Visions (Athens, 1983), p. 196.

44. See Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research: Principal Contents of Vols I-LIV (London, undated), p. 17. In the Proceedings Bergson's Address was translated by H. Wildon Carr.

45. See Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, p. 8.

46. 'As a reasoned defense of "psychical research", it surely was convincing to Yeats'. (Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', p. 8.)

47. See Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', p. 8.

48. Salter, Trance Mediumship, p. 8.

49. See Salter, p. 8. 'The phenomena continued till 1881. In 1873 he developed, and exercised until 1883, the faculty called "automatic writing", in which the writer is not conscious at the time of what he is writing, or is about to write. In 1874 he met F. W. H. Myers and Edmund Gurney, who had recently become associated in the first systematic study of physical phenomena, and were two of the principal founders of the Society for Psychical Research. They were greatly impressed by his sincerity and by the accounts they received of his personal experiences.'

50. Salter, p. 8.

51. Apart from Appendix D to this thesis, where the most interesting extracts from the Moses Script appear, see also Goldman, p. 110.

52. See Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', p. 3.

53. Harper, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', pp. 7-8.

54. See 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', note 5 to p. 110, and p. 127.

C H A P T E R 2

YEATS AS A 'SPIRITUALIST' AND 'PSYCHICAL RESEARCHER'

... I have just had a certificate of caution from a well-known American medium who has turned me out of her seances because she says 'nothing ever satisfies' me.

Yeats to his father, August 5, 1913
(Letters, 584)

The previous chapter has given the reader some idea of the various stages of Yeats's spiritualistic career. My intention in this chapter is neither to give a detailed account of that career nor to add another summary of the 'spiritualistic interlude': a detailed account deserves to be the subject of a separate thesis, and a summary would not be more enlightening than those already available in print. My aim is to present Yeats as a 'spiritualist' and 'psychical researcher', as I consider that it is essential to understand the poet's attitude towards the paranormal before discussing his use of it in his art.

To present Yeats's attitude, I shall deal with three

characteristic instances of his spiritualistic career: his encounter with 'Leo Africanus' (the 'Leo Case'), his experiments with the automatic writer Elizabeth Radcliffe, and his investigation of the alleged miracle at Mirebeau. As the encounter with Leo is by far the most important and characteristic of the three, I shall deal with it in more detail. Before considering these three instances, I shall give some general information regarding Yeats's interest in spiritualism and its investigation.

Background Information

Yeats's attitude towards spiritualism was negative at first. In his opening address at the Dublin Hermetic Society (June 16, 1885), at the beginning of his occult career, he attacked not only European science and theology for not answering the 'great question whether the soul be immortal or not',¹ but also spiritualism. 'Science will tell you the soul of man is a volatile gas capable of solution in glycerine'. Theology offers 'Fairy tales and legends' while 'these days demand demonstration and experiment'. Spiritualism was no better:

Where it is wise it will tell you that year by year the footfall grows softer on the haunted stairway, that year by year the mysterious breath becomes fainter and fainter, that every decade takes something from the vividness of the haunting shadow till it has grown so faint that none but the keenest eyes can see the feeble outline and then it is gone it is dead dead [sic] forever.²

Some two years after the first meeting of the Dublin Hermetic Society, Yeats met Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in

London. The Blavatsky story has been told several times, and I do not intend to repeat it here. What is interesting in the context of the present thesis, is that the Russian lady's 'Theosophy' seemed to oppose science and theology on grounds similar to those of Yeats's address at the Hermetic Society. Blavatsky's anti-clericalism, as well as her fierce condemnation of scientific materialism, fascinated Yeats. Ignoring that the main object of science is not the definition of essences but the discovery of relationships, she stressed the inability of science to control 'even ... the world of Matter', as it cannot define matter or energy, although it constantly refers to both.³ Still, as 'these days demand demonstration and experiment', Yeats was annoyed at the too theoretical character of Blavatsky's teachings, and proposed a 'scheme for organization of occult research'.⁴ The proposal was accepted. Unfortunately, however, there were no miracles, and, what is more, other members of the Theosophical Society began having doubts. Yeats's 'experiments had tried Madame Blavatsky's patience too far',⁵ and in 1890 he was asked to resign from the Society.

Although Blavatsky had started as a spirit medium,⁶ now she repudiated spiritualistic experimentation, stressing the dangers of passivity of the will and the pitfalls of black magic.⁷ The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, into which Yeats was initiated in 1890,⁸ discouraged mediumship and seance attendance on similar grounds. Yeats, however, who had already been at a seance with Katharine Tynan,

presumably in 1886,⁹ was to abandon the magician's bias against spiritualism.

We cannot be sure as regards the time when Yeats attended seances once more. Lady Gregory writes that the Countess Markiewicz (Constance Gore-Booth) took him to another seance, in London.¹⁰ Presumably, this was at the time when Lady Gregory set him 'to gathering folk stories',¹¹ but his involvement in spiritualism was not serious until he had read her book on folk beliefs.¹² Yeats's own published and unpublished writings are not very helpful in the direction of determining the time when his career as a 'spiritualist' and 'psychical researcher' began. In 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places' (written in 1914) he says:

Some fifteen years ago I was in bad health and could not work, and Lady Gregory brought me from cottage to cottage while she began to collect stories, and presently when I was at work again she went on with her collection alone till it grew to be ... the most considerable of its kind As that ancient system of belief unfolded before us ... it was as though we had begun to live in a dream

I had noticed many analogies in modern spiritism and began a more careful comparison, going a good deal to seances for the first time and reading all writers of any reputation I could find in English or French. I found much that was moving, when I had climbed to the top storey of some house in Soho or Holloway, and, having paid my shilling, awaited, among servant girls, the wisdom of some fat old medium. (IIWFT, 21-22)

In 'A General Introduction for my Work' he also relates his interest in 'spiritism' with Lady Gregory's book of folk beliefs but, again, he gives no dates.

When Lady Gregory asked me to annotate her Visions and Beliefs I began, that I might understand what she had taken down in Galway, an investigation of contemporary spiritualism. For several years I frequented those mediums who in various poor parts

of London instruct artisans or their wives for a few pence upon their relations to their dead ... then I compared what she had heard in Galway, or in London, with the visions of Swedenborg (E & I, 51)

And his unpublished manuscript headed 'Leo Africanus' (Appendix B), a major source of information about Yeats's spiritualistic career up to 1915, is not more enlightening as regards the time when this career began. Indeed, 'Leo Africanus' adds to our confusion when, in a section he intended to cross out, Yeats seems to suggest that, before Leo's first appearance ('Report of Seance', Appendix A: 1), he had attended only one seance.

After we examine all relevant published and unpublished material, one thing seems certain: Yeats's serious interest in spiritualism and its investigation began when Lady Gregory had finished collecting her material, presumably before 1909.¹³ In the text published as Yeats's Memoirs, there is a suggestion of serious involvement in that year: Yeats offered, 'if the Dublin branch of the Psychical Research Society would arrange it, to spend the night in the Baggot Street haunted house' (Memoirs, 185). Still, 'a more significant involvement was yet to come'.¹⁴

Hone, Ellmann and Moore agree that Yeats's spiritualistic interests were greatly encouraged by an encounter with a 'remarkable American medium', during his lecture tour in America, in 1911.¹⁵ Hone and Moore say that the medium was a Mrs Crandon, the wife of an American doctor. But, as Goldman has shown, it could not have been Mrs Crandon, the famous 'Margery medium', for she did not begin practising her mediumship before 1922.¹⁶ Goldman

shows that 'the remarkable American medium' was 'undoubtedly "Mrs Chenoweth"' (Mrs C.), then under investigation by J. H. Hyslop, Professor of Logic and Ethics at the University of Columbia and prominent personality in the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR).¹⁷ Indeed, she had started becoming Hyslop's 'Exhibit A from 1909, in both the Proceedings and the Journal' of the ASPR,¹⁸ to which many members of the British SPR subscribed. 'Any acquaintance with these journals', says Goldman, 'would have alerted Yeats to the significance Hyslop was attributing to his "Mrs C."'.¹⁹ It goes without question that, from 1909 or 1911 on, Yeats was very well acquainted with Hyslop's researches and publications,²⁰ and we can suppose that, although he may have met 'Mrs Chenoweth' in 1911,²¹ he knew about her before that year.

Goldman's note on the identity of the 'remarkable American medium' of 1911 would have been of little significance if it did not tell us something about the kind of psychical research that first attracted Yeats. When Yeats entered the history of spiritualism there had already been two wings in American psychical research.²² The first and earlier wing was mainly typified by the open-minded scepticism of William James, who was interested in the phenomena of spiritualism from the stand-point of the scientific researcher that examines the phenomena of consciousness. The second ('dogmatic') wing was typified by Hyslop and was survival-oriented, as Hyslop had ceased to believe that telepathy or the multiple personality theory might explain the phenomena occurring at seances: these phenomena, he

thought, could be explained only by the theory that the dead communicated with the living. The fact that the medium who encouraged greatly Yeats's interest in spiritualism was Hyslop's 'Exhibit A' suggests that Yeats was first attracted by the survival-oriented wing.

The reasons for which Yeats was attracted to 'survival' mediumship are not of first importance here; still, they must be dealt with, as they are relevant in the context of this thesis. Apparently, Yeats had started to believe that mediums such as 'Mrs C.' offered evidence for answering the 'great question' through 'demonstration and experiment'. Moreover, one could suggest that there is a relation between the deaths of Susan Pollexfen (1900), John Synge (1909), and George Pollexfen (1910), on the one hand, and Yeats's spiritualistic involvement, on the other.²³ But there remains a crucial question regarding Yeats's motive. Did he turn to mediumship because he wanted to offer 'demonstration and experiment' to others, or because he wanted to convince himself of the reality of the 'Other World'? Virginia Moore has a ready answer:

I cannot agree with the usually perceptive Ellmann that he longed to be convinced of the supernatural. He was already convinced of the supernatural Undoubtedly Yeats suffered from a certain curiosity ... and was not averse to new types of proof; but his main motive was ... the passionate hope of finding a proof of immortality comprehensible to everybody.²⁴ (My italics)

Moore assumes that Yeats's previous occult experiments had already provided him with proof regarding the reality of the 'Other World'. This is an arbitrary conclusion. Before the 'spiritualist interlude', when, for example, he was

experimenting with Mathers, Yeats had never had anything that he regarded as proof of personal survival after death. His own parasensory experiences (mainly telepathic communication), which he describes in 'Magic',²⁵ as well as those of his elder sister, Lily (prophetic dreams),²⁶ could not rule out the possibility of a 'physicalist' explanation. As Lily said, the supernatural 'is something which the Marconis of the future will make use of'.²⁷ Thus, not having any proof regarding the transcendental nature of the 'Other World', Yeats could not be seeking 'new types of proof'. Undoubtedly, he was convinced of the paranormal, but this does not mean that he was convinced of the supernatural. After all, even the arch-sceptic John Butler Yeats came to acknowledge the authenticity of his daughter's psychic feats, although he rejected the spiritualistic explanation: 'My daughter Lily is psychic, extraordinarily psychic and can foresee the future of which I could give you many instances. But she is too intelligent and too well taught to believe in the supernatural.'²⁸ William Butler Yeats was, as Ellmann puts it,

Latently sceptical by nature, but craving the irrefutable evidence of the supernatural which would finally lay his doubts at rest and prove that a child's refusal to follow his father's scepticism was more than a son's champing against paternal authority....²⁹

This judgement may sound as arbitrary as Moore's; however, it is supported by Yeats's unpublished records of seances. As the reader of the Appendices to the present thesis will see, these records do not suggest that Yeats was convinced that the phenomena of seance rooms, however impressive,

were manifestations of the supernatural. But, at the same time, they do suggest that he longed to be convinced. In this sense, it is understandable that, after returning from the American lecture tour of 1911, he attended seances for the 'convinced' opponents of the British SPR.

The Leo Case

At that time, the centre of attraction for people who wanted to communicate with their dead relatives was Mrs Etta Wriedt of Detroit. Mrs Wriedt had been brought to England by the editor W. T. Stead, founder of the London Spiritualist Alliance (not supervised by the SPR).³⁰ In Chapter 1 we saw that during a seance with that medium 'Leo Africanus' visited Yeats for the first time. It will be recalled that the seance took place on May 9, 1912, at Cambridge House, Wimbledon.

Leo spoke in what is called a 'direct voice', that is, not through the medium but through Mrs Wriedt's usual aluminium trumpet that was standing in the middle of the room. As the voice of the control was at first too loud for Yeats to understand what it had said, Mrs Wriedt 'interpreted that it claimed to come for "Mr. Gates"'.³¹ Yeats was eager to identify himself with 'Mr. Gates':³² 'I said this was evidently me'. The control then said 'in a more distinct voice which I could follow ... that it had been with me from childhood'. 'They' (apparently the spirits) wanted to use Yeats's 'hand and brain'. Yeats was 'a little impatient'; indeed, he was 'repelled' by what he considered

an appeal to his vanity: 'The voice said something about my possessing the key or the key-mind they wanted'. He was 'repelled' because, in the course of another seance, a 'spirit' had flattered him in a similar manner: on that occasion he was told that he 'would bring a closer relation between this world and the next than ever before', and he felt he was being 'tempted with a childhood temptation', with a 'crude appeal' to his vanity. In the 'Leo Africanus' MS we read that a spirit had told him he had 'a key-mind', that he 'was necessary & so on' (Appendix: B).

At any rate, Yeats asked for information about the time when Leo had lived on earth, but 'I got no answer I could understand'. When he asked, 'did you live in the 18th century?', the voice said, '"Why, man?" or some such phrase implying impatience', and finally identified itself as 'Leo, the writer, you know Leo, the writer'. And when he noted that he knew no such person, the control said that he would hear of him in Rome. Strangely enough, Mrs Wriedt heard that Leo had said, 'You will find me in the Encyclopaedia.' Perhaps it is characteristic of Yeats's early willingness to be convinced of the sincerity of mediums that he thought 'Both may have been said'.

Still, there were details that could convince almost anyone of Mrs Wriedt's sincerity. For example, Leo 'had a strong Irish accent, whereas the Medium had a strong American accent'. As far as I have been able to find, Mrs Wriedt spoke 'Yankee'. Yeats was not the only person who was impressed by sudden shifts in pronunciation, accent, and intonation at her seances. The 'Eyahs', 'Yahs', 'Yups'

and 'Yaps' would be followed by 'pure English' that amazed the sitters, who would exclaim that 'No American Lady ever spoke like that!'³³ Yeats, however, thought that the Irish accent 'was not quite true'; it was

The kind of accent an Irishman some years out of Ireland, or an Englishman who had a fair knowledge of Ireland, might assume in telling an Irish story.

As Mrs Wriedt had heard Leo saying 'You will find me in the Encyclopaedia', one of the sitters (Miss E. K. Harper, W. T. Stead's former secretary), offered to consult Lemprière, but the Leo she found was 'an author of Pella who wrote on the nature of Gods, et c.' Lemprière gave references which might prove that 'this Leo was also an explorer', but Yeats decided 'Not to look up the references till after [the] next Seance as they might become a suggestion to the control.' It is noteworthy that when Yeats had asked Mrs Wriedt about 'the meaning of [Leo's] Irish accent', she had replied that the control got its means of expression from his [Yeats's] mind. But it seems that Yeats suspected that controls 'borrowed' more than their means of expression from the sitters' minds. Apparently, he considered the theory of telepathy or thought transference as a possible explanation of mediumship (a theory supported by a few psychical researchers of the sceptical wing). If this was true, the medium's unconscious mind could gather information from Yeats's mind and then impart it to him. But, at least as regards Leo's first appearance, this could not have been so, except if one considered the possibility of 'cryptomnesia' on Yeats's part — the possibility

that he had forgotten what he knew about Leo, that the relevant information was buried in his unconscious. It seems that Yeats himself did not exclude this possibility, for some three years after, in the MS. headed 'Leo Africanus', he wrote: 'When you [Leo] first came to me I had to the best of my belief never heard of you nor of your work' (my italics).

Unable to decide on the identity of Leo in terms of spiritualism and psychical research, Yeats concluded his 'Report' by adding two paragraphs in which he considered the possibility of an astrological explanation of the control's nature.

In the first paragraph he wrote that 'Leo may turn out to be a symbolic being', that is, symbolic of 'Leo, the constellation, the house of sun'. This 'would account for the arrogance implied by his impatience when I did not know his name' and by the control's appeal to Yeats's vanity. Yeats went even further than that: as he had always supposed that he worked and thought his 'most profound thoughts' under the influence of 'what an Astrologer calls solar', he considered that Leo, 'this being or state ... may be a dramatization of a reality'. Here it should be noted that, when he was a member of the Theosophical Society, Yeats had considered the possibility that Madame Blavatsky's 'teachers' were 'unconscious dramatizations' of her own 'trance nature'.³⁴ Similarly, in speculating on his encounter with Leo, he speaks of 'dramatization', considering, as it seems, the possible psychological dimension of Leo's

appearance (discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis).

In the second paragraph, however, he moves to an overtly occult pole of interpretation. There he considers the possibility that 'the domineering jocular type of half-Irish, or English-Irish story-teller', suggested by 'certain intonations of the voice' and by 'such an expression as "Why, man?" may be a lower solar form', a 'perversion of the solar power'. Perhaps remembering the theory of 'personating spirits' who 'adopt the rôle of distinguished public characters',³⁵ Yeats concludes his 'Report' considering the possibility 'that certain controls ... give themselves names of great antiquity' which they select 'from the recorded or unrecorded memories of the world'.

The last two paragraphs of the 'Report' are characteristic of Yeats's scepticism. In them he approaches his subject from different points of view (astrological, psychological, spiritualistic), and considers the possibility that Leo was an 'image out of Spiritus Mundi' ('memories of the world'), but he never seems to consider seriously that Leo was what he claimed to be. At any rate, he suspended judgement for the moment.

From 1912 on, Leo reappeared to Yeats at Mrs Wriedt's; but, as we saw in the previous chapter, he made his most crucial appearance through Miss or Mrs 'S—' on July 22, 1915, when he claimed that he was Yeats's opposite, that if associated with him, Yeats would have 'perfected Nature', and asked the poet to write him a letter expressing all his doubts.

Indeed, Yeats had many doubts about the voice that claimed to be Leo's. After the seance of May 9, 1912, he had 'read in Chambers biographical dictionary about Leo Africanus', but had begun suspecting that Mrs Wriedt was 'perhaps a ventriloquist of some kind' and 'looked up guides for her visitors in Chambers, when [she] knew nothing of their dead friends & relations'. He also suspected that in his case, Mrs Wriedt 'may have been in a hurry', as 'Leo Africanus, a geographer & traveller is for me no likely guide'.³⁶ Apparently, Yeats thought that, as W. Usborne Moore had written in Glimpses of the Next State (1911), 'all successful spiritist phenomena' were rooted in 'sympathy', a force by which beings 'on the other side are drawn to us' and which is strong not only in the case of relatives or friends, but also in the case of those with 'kindred tastes, professions, and interests'.³⁷ Thus, artists were drawn to artists, poets to poets. Encyclopaedias, however, suggested that Leo Africanus was 'no likely guide' for Yeats.

Al-Hasan Ibn Muhammad Al-Wazzan Al-Zaiyati or Johannes-Leo or Leo Africanus, as he was later called, was a man of Moorish stock who had been educated mainly at Fez. When he was very young he travelled in the Barbary States and visited many parts of the Sahara Desert, as well as Egypt, Constantinople, and Armenia. In about 1520 he was captured by pirates and was presented as a slave to Pope Leo X. The Pope was sympathetic towards him, acknowledged his merit and assigned him a pension. He also bestowed on him his

two names, Johannes and Leo. In Rome, Johannes-Leo learned Latin and Italian, and taught Arabic. He wrote a Spanish-Arabic vocabulary and other works of which only a Description of Africa is extant today.³⁸ Thus, although an author, Leo was definitely a man of action with whom Yeats had almost nothing in common.

Yeats, however, did not take long to discover that Leo was a kindred spirit. In the 1896 Hakluyt edition of Leo's Descrizione dell' Africa (trans. John Pory, 1600) he found that Leo was also 'a distinguished poet among the Moors', although his poems had been lost. This discovery 'whetted his appetite',³⁹ and made him eager for further contact with Leo, as did a correction of a statement in Chambers, i.e. that after his twenty years in Rome Leo died in his 'own country in ? 1542'.

Yeats began to think that Leo Africanus himself had addressed him on May 9, 1912, and on other occasions. Still, he put Leo to the test, wanting to check the control's knowledge of Italian. During a seance with Mrs Wriedt,

A woman sat next me. I discovered she knew some Italian I said if a spirit who calls himself Leo could speak to her in Italian. A little later she had a confusing [?] conversation in Italian with the voice Leo's Italian she said was excellent.

If Leo had passed the language test, some doubts remained in Yeats's mind. After 'the fading of the effect upon me of the Italian conversation', he still thought that Leo's voice was like those of Mrs Wriedt's: it was artificial and imitable. But, as far as I have been able

to find, there may well have been an additional reason for Yeats's distrust. I have found that on May 25, 1911, a year before Yeats's first encounter with Leo Africanus, a Scottish doctor named Abraham Wallace was present at a seance with Mrs Wriedt when an 'Arabian knight' tried to communicate with a sitter.⁴⁰ Dr Wallace was Yeats's friend and accompanied him on many of his spiritualistic 'expeditions', as the reader of the Appendices will see. Indeed, it seems that Dr Wallace was to Yeats what 'Dr Watson' was to 'Sherlock Holmes'. It seems unlikely that Dr Wallace had not informed Yeats of the incident, and it seems probable that Yeats may have regarded Leo as a further 'variation' on the 'Arabian knight' theme. What is more, reports of Leo's appearances when Yeats was not present may have made him 'more and more sceptical'.⁴¹

But Leo's appearance through another medium some three years after whetted Yeats's appetite once more. As we read in the 'Leo Africanus' MS (Appendix B) this time the medium 'S—'

began to speak rapidly saying whatever came to [into?] her head. You [Leo] were as it seemed the speaker You were my opposite. By association with one another we should each become more complete, you had been unscrupulous ... I was over cautious & conscientious. Then you said if I would write a letter to you as if you were still living among your Moors or Sudanese, & put into it all my difficulties and you would answer it in your name, you would overshadow me in [this] letter & answer all my doubts.

Indeed, Yeats's 'letter' to Leo is mostly an expression of his scepticism. 'I doubt', he writes,

though not always, that the shades who speak to

me through mediums are the shades they profess to be How can I feel certain of your identity, when there has been so much to rouse my suspicion.

Unable to answer this question, Yeats goes on to reflect on an explanation of mediumship which is based on the theory of 'secondary personality'. He thinks that Leo may have been a 'portion' or a 'split off' of the medium's unconscious mind. Moreover, he seems to combine the theory of 'multiple and suppressed/released personality'⁴² with telepathy (mind-reading as a possible explanation of mediumship) and with Professor Richet's theory of 'cryptesthesia'. According to this theory, the medium's unconscious mind can 'travel' all over the globe, 'gather information unknown to the sitter and immediately impart it either by voice or in writing at the seance'.⁴³ Thus, Yeats writes to Leo:

... if you can read my mind ... why not some distant mind, for we have no proof that distance affects the faculty. Can in fact a secondary personality [obtain] knowledge drawn from many sources & so build up a complex knowledge, & even a difficult language [Italian]. Certainly I am incredulous, but ... after years of investigation [I have] accepted the most incredible facts.

If the reader of this 'letter' is eager to know Yeats's explanation of Leo's appearance, he will be disappointed. The only thing of which he will be certain is that Yeats was widely read on matters of psychical research. Indeed, Yeats considers all major explanations of mediumship suggested either by the convinced or the sceptical wing of psychical researchers. However, he seems to incline towards a 'physicalist', naturalistic explanation, or, at least, not to exclude it. The last lines of the 'letter' are

characteristic of his ambiguous attitude.

Are you not perhaps becoming a second Leo Africanus, a shadow upon the wall, a strong echo, and yet made subtle [?] by powers the old traveller had known, a [mind] with knowledge and faculties [drawn] from many minds.

Certainly, this question is enigmatic, but perhaps not as enigmatic as it seems, for it combines three major theories mentioned above ('secondary personality', telepathy, and 'cryptesthesia'). That is, Yeats is asking whether Leo is not the creation of a 'secondary personality' which, through mind-reading on a universal scale ('cryptesthesia') became a mere simulacrum of the historical Leo Africanus. In other words, these lines suggest the possibility that Leo was a creation of one or more minds, and that, as it went along, accumulated notions of the historical personage, thus 'becoming a second Leo Africanus', 'an image out of Spiritus Mundi'.

It may be that this, indeed, was Yeats's final position on Leo's nature. Such a conclusion is supported by a consideration of Yeats's rhetoric. As James Olney observed in a recent essay on Yeatsian ambiguity,

By asking a question, and specifically a rhetorical question, Yeats succeeds in making a statement — for a rhetorical question implies its own answer, and thus contains a statement, by the very terms in which it is expressed — yet he leaves the critic no way to refute his statement because it has been made in the form of a question rather than as a declaration.⁴⁴

Olney illustrates this by examples from 'over forty of the poems in Collected Poems' that 'end with questions ... which ... is a device for slipping the literalist noose'. One of the most characteristic examples is offered by 'Why

should not Old Men be Mad?' (CP, 388-89), the obvious answer to which is: 'They should be. Know this.'⁴⁵ The last lines of the 'letter' to Leo seem to be a 'local instance' of this strategy. To the question 'Are you not perhaps becoming ... a [mind] with knowledge and faculties [drawn] from many minds' the obvious answer according to James Olney should be: 'Yes, you are.' Still, the question 'why should Yeats employ the same strategy in a strictly private document, apparently not intended for publication?' can find no easy answer — except if he simply meant what he wrote, if he simply expressed his doubts and 'difficulties'.

More than twenty pages of the manuscript are Leo's 'answer' to Yeats's 'difficulties'. Arnold Goldman has noted that in these pages there is 'no attempt by Yeats to alter his handwriting', that 'he is not affecting "automatic writing"', and does not 'imply he is reporting the words of a control-voice which he has heard'.⁴⁶ This is true, with the exception, I believe, of the first page, and especially of the first lines. There one gets the impression that Yeats did try to alter his handwriting by making it more diagonal and energetic, but soon abandoned the idea. Indeed, these lines, as well as the rest of the 'answer', are the product of a conscious effort. In December 1916, after he had written 'Leo Africanus', he acknowledged this fact. At his sitting with Mrs Leonard (Appendix A:13) the medium's control observed that Yeats 'ought to write automatically' himself. In his note to the control's suggestion Yeats wrote:

'Leo Africanus', my guide as he claims to be, once told me . . . that if I would write on a certain subject he would write through me. . . . This however would be rather intuition [?] than automatic.

Even if the word 'intuition' is not certain, we hardly need it to conclude that Leo's 'answer' is not a piece of automatic writing. We can safely consider it an 'intuition', in the sense that Yeats puts in it all the arguments that Leo could possibly use to convince him of his being an authentic 'spirit'.

Leo's 'letter' opens with a kind reproof of Yeats's doubts; indeed, he is patronizing Yeats and is accusing him of paying too much attention to current scientific thinking.

I understand enough of the thought of your age & understand your difficulty on philosophical grounds, & because of certain experiences you believe as still do the majority of your contemporaries . . . but when you examine appearances you are mastered by a formula You only recognize what is in the best opinion of your time [and] has been proved by deductive science. You wish to assume . . . the existence of a spirit . . . by some faculty of the living mind Like the Swiss Professor Mr Flournoy⁴⁷ . . . you are prepared to believe as a man what you reject as a man of science. Yet the formula of science, though necessary as a mechanism . . . precisely because the known is much less than the unknown, ensures that a scientific exposition can but have [—] value.

Yeats is 'sympathetic'; he 'meet[s] many people; he discuss[es] much'; he 'must meet all these doubts on the way'; but he cannot have a life of his own, as did Swendenborg [sic], Boem [sic], & Blake'. In short, Leo accuses Yeats of being too much of a public figure, someone who seeks 'not [his] own difficulties but the difficulties of others': 'Entangled in error', says Leo, 'you are but a public man'.

After defining his relationship to Yeats ('I [am] your contrary mind'), Leo moves to the doctrinal part of his 'letter'. Here Yeats, writing as Leo, sums up almost everything he knows that could defend the existence of the 'Other World'. At first he refers to the notions of Henry More and to his own (Leo's) experience of life after death. But as he feels that he must take into consideration more modern views on the subject than those of More, he refers to the concept of the unconscious, in an effort to bring about a reconciliation between old and new terms. More's 'Spiritus Mundi', says Leo, 'is what your century has named the unconscious'.

Leo then attempts to explain mediumship on the basis of the multiple (split) personality theory: 'Just as crystals split [?] according to certain laws', the personality of a medium is split into a number of dramatizations. Apparently trying to accomodate Yeats's feeling that there was something artificial in Leo's voice, 'Leo-Yeats' suggests that dramatization may account for this: the dramatis personae of seance-rooms choose voices that are characteristic and imitable. Thus, the controls of many mediums are similar - 'a child always in high spirits', a 'deep voiced man', or an 'American Indian': controls 'choose the voice that comes easier'. Still, Leo notes, the thoughts and mental pictures of controls are authentic, in the sense that they correspond to the thoughts and mental pictures of spirits. Spirits, in their turn, draw their thoughts and mental pictures from the minds of the sitters. Certainly, this is a vicious circle, but the main idea suggested by Leo is

that, in the course of a successful seance, controls, spirits, and sitters, depend upon each other. The 'drama' of seance-rooms is the result of a process where the dead and the living stage each other's dreams.

Obscure though it is, Leo's explanation of mediumship takes into account all major 'scientific' explanations of mediumship. Like Yeats, Leo considers telepathy, secondary/multiple personality, and Professor Richet's theory to be plausible explanations of mediumship. At the end of his letter, however, he combines the above theories with the 'spiritist' belief that communication between this and the 'Other World' is possible, as he claims once more to be an authentic 'spirit', a ghost: 'Yet do not doubt that I was also Leo Africanus the traveller' Thus Leo comes to express William James's view that all theories - 'scientific', psychological, or 'spiritist' - might be true.

But Leo's bravura in psychical research did not satisfy Yeats that the 'great question whether the soul be immortal or not' was answered. Thus, in a postscript to his 'guide', he writes:

I am not convinced that in this letter there is one sentence that has come from beyond my own imagination I have been conscious of no sudden illumination - nothing has surprised me, & I have not had any of those dreams, which in the past have persuaded me of some spiritual presence.

Indeed, the Leo-'letter' is too well organized - perhaps better organized than some of Yeats's published essays - to be an automatic script, as theses are followed by examples or by references to spiritualistic and other occult data.

To the Applicant:

39

[illegible]

PLATE 4: The first page of Yeats's postscript.

It would seem that the 'Leo experiment' had failed. Yeats, however, had not wasted his time and energy in writing the 'letters' to and from Leo. The 'correspondence' with his 'contrary mind' had given him a chance to write out a summa of his thoughts on spiritualistic phenomena. What is more, Yeats's encounter with his 'opposite' proved a significant factor in the evolution of his doctrine of the Mask, and anticipated the historical-metaphysical formulations in Per Amica Silentia Lunae and elsewhere. (See below, Chapter 6.)

The Radcliffe Experiments

Certainly, Yeats's 'relationship' with Leo is the most important event in his spiritualistic career, as it had far-reaching effects on the development of his mind and imagination. Still, from the spring of 1912, when Leo first appeared to Yeats, to the summer or autumn of 1915, when, as I have already suggested, their 'correspondence' was written, there were other important events related to the psychical researches of the latter. One of these was his encounter with Miss Elizabeth Radcliffe, a young woman whose automatic scripts in many languages impressed him greatly. As the encounter with Miss Radcliffe has been well-documented by George Mills Harper and John S. Kelly,⁴⁸ I shall not go over the same details here. The following is a summary of the major facts relating to it.

Yeats met Elizabeth Radcliffe in the spring of 1912, probably through a friend of Olivia Shakespeare's. After

examining her scripts, Yeats became enthusiastic over her mediumistic talent, and on August 5, 1913, he wrote to his father:

I have had wonderful 'psychic' evidence of late. A charming girl I know ... has developed automatic writing of the most astounding type. She only knows English and a little French but writes, in her mediumistic state, Greek, Latin, Italian, Chinese, Provençal, Hebrew, Italian [sic] and other languages; she answers mental questions in Greek. The case cannot be published but I am examining it carefully with the help of British Museum language experts and writing a report as elaborate as if for publication. Various spirits have also written through her hand and given their names and the dates of their deaths, etc. I have in every case been able to verify their statements, though sometimes only after long research. In no case had I ever heard of their existence. (Letters, 583-84)

Yeats hoped to prove once and for all that spirit communication was possible. Some of Miss Radcliffe's communications seemed to refute 'all the rationalist theories, fraud, unconscious action of the mind, forgotten memories, and so on' (Letters, 584). For example, 'Thomas Emerson', a policeman who was demoted and dismissed in 1850, 'gave the time and place of his suicide', though he 'could not be traced except with great difficulty and the reluctant help of Scotland Yard'.⁴⁹

Yeats wrote an essay on the Radcliffe case (the 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E. R.', to which I referred in the Introduction and in Chapter 1) but did not publish it, for reasons that will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Still, he did not keep his discovery to himself. On All-Hallow's Eve, 1913, he gave a lecture on 'Ghosts and Dreams' to the Dublin Branch of the SPR, and, without

revealing the young medium's name, spoke of his experiments with her. It seems that he was a little too assertive when he stated that he himself had

read writings written in a medium's hand
writings in Greek, in Hebrew, in Latin, in German,
some in Welsh ... a great mass of tongues — certainly
unknown to the medium

for the following day The Irish Times congratulated both him and his spirits 'upon their linguistic accomplishments'.⁵⁰ Yeats responded with a letter to the editor of the newspaper, which was dated 1st November and appeared in the issue of November 3, and said that he had 'claimed no such accomplishment', for 'Life is short.' The editor's answer was that 'life is too short for explanations of his psychical adventures'.⁵¹

Yeats's psychical researches were looked down upon by the 'rationalist establishment'; he himself, however, had decided that 'the great controversy is ended'.⁵²

But for all his expressed conviction that his 'amazing experiences' were the work of literal spirit-visitors, Yeats was no simpleton. When writing his 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E. R.', he was aware, for example, of the fact that much of the medium's Greek, usually drawn from the New Testament, was full of errors, although he was rather too quick to assume that certain ungrammatical and incoherent sentences or words implied a complicated process of communication. He thought that the long dead had forgotten how to use language, and thus had to reach the medium by means of the memories of the recently dead. As there was 'always a control, who guides the medium's hand or gives the words to the medium in some way, and

another who speaks', errors implied 'difficulty in hearing'.⁵³

Such a forced explanation of errors in the script of Miss Radcliffe would be pardonable, somehow, if Yeats was convinced, till the end, that the evidence he had before him was irrefutable. But this does not seem to be the case, as many corrections to the typescript (June, 1914) suggest doubt and hesitancy.⁵⁴ What is more, in his handwritten note to the typescript he considers the hypothesis that

Secondary, & tertiary personalities once formed may act independently of the medium, have ideoplastic power & pick the minds of distant people & so speak in tongues unknown to all present. If we imagine these artificial beings surviving the medium we can account for ... most of the facts of spiritism.⁵⁵

This note is dated 'July 7, 1914'. As it will be recalled, Yeats considered a similar possibility a year after, when, in the 'Leo Africanus' MS, he asked his 'interlocutor': 'Are you not perhaps becoming ... a shadow upon the wall ... a [mind] with knowledge and faculties [drawn] from many minds.' Here, too, he considers the theories of 'secondary personality' and 'cryptesthesia'.

Considering Yeats's expressed conviction, shortly after he had completed the Radcliffe essay, that 'the great controversty is ended', one may find this note confusing: as Harper and Kelly say, 'he merely adds to our perplexity'.⁵⁶ Still, one of Yeats's records of seances suggests that this note is not as puzzling as it seems to be. On July 6, 1914, one day before Yeats wrote it, he had a seance with Mrs Wriedt at which a spirit-visitor identified herself as 'Sister Mary Ellis'. This was one of Miss Radcliffe's most convincing communicators, one of

those who offered 'irrefutable proof' that the spiritualistic explanation of 'supernatural phenomena' was correct. It seems, however, that her appearance through a medium other than Miss Radcliffe made Yeats suspicious. Of course, he had no reasons to doubt Radcliffe's integrity: she was 'very simple and pious, a girl of good family' (Letters, 583). As the possibility of a 'conspiracy' between her and Mrs Wriedt did not even cross his mind, he had to resort to the only possible explanation: Mrs Wriedt's 'Sister Mary Ellis' was a product of the collective mind, 'an image out of Spiritus Mundi', an 'artificial being', 'a shadow upon the wall', who acted 'independently of the medium'.

But it is not only Yeats's note that suggests his hesitancy to define the nature of the 'spirits' who guided Miss Radcliffe's hand. It may be interesting to know that, at the seance of July 6 with Mrs Wriedt, he felt the need to ask Leo what he thought of Miss Radcliffe. Leo's answer was ambiguous, and did not keep Yeats from writing the note.

This note brings us to the reasons for which Yeats did not care to have his essay on the Radcliffe scripts published. The widely accepted view is that the young automatic writer disliked publicity.⁵⁷ Still, this is not a sound reason. In the first place, Yeats had taken care not to mention her name in the typescript, and had replaced her initial with X. What is more, 'she herself spoke of producing a small anonymous book a little later', so 'it seems unlikely that she would have held out against

publication of the 'essay'.⁵⁸ One can imagine a number of reasons why Yeats did not publish the essay and did not even present it to investigators from the SPR, of which he was an Associate Member from February 1913.⁵⁹ I believe that the major reason should be sought in Yeats's gradual disenchantment with Miss Radcliffe's mediumship. Although, as I have noted, he did not doubt the medium's sincerity, he could not exclude the possibility of other — psychological or 'physicalist' — explanations, especially after it turned out that the time and place of Thomas Emerson's death were always available at Somerset House, where a register of births, marriages, and deaths had been kept since 1837.⁶⁰ Thus, the automatic message 'Died by self appointment Richmond Bridge, Thomas Emerson policeman April 1850',⁶¹ simply testified an official record that was drawn up some sixty years previously. Yeats did not have to resort to mediumship or to play 'Sherlock Holmes' to make this discovery.

As Yeats's researches into Miss Radcliffe's Scripts resulted to nothing definite, it would appear that his enthusiasm over them marked another period of wasted time and energy; but this is not so. The Radcliffe case had offered him 'a personal laboratory situation',⁶² as well as knowledge of the tests proposed by 'scientific and sceptical' psychical researchers. What is more, the Radcliffe experiments had taught him to respect '"scientific" procedures' and to see that the only way to answer the 'great question' through 'demonstration and experiment' was that of '"materialistic" science'.⁶³ As was suggested in the Introduction, and as will be seen in the

course of this thesis, Yeats's new approach to the supernatural, his insistence on 'not claiming more than is felt to be true',⁶⁴ was inherited by a considerable part of his literary work from 1914 on.

The Alleged Miracle at Mirebeau

By the spring of 1914 Yeats had moved closer to the sceptical wing of psychical research. Now he had become the friend of the Hon. Everard Feilding, a prominent member of the SPR and a 'natural sceptic'.⁶⁵ It is interesting, however, that although Feilding respected the procedures of that Society, he criticized it for letting 'golden opportunities go by' — opportunities to witness the making of 'religious miraculous legends', such as 'the walls of Jericho, or Aaron's rod'.⁶⁶ It seems that his sense of drama, combined with his prestige as an investigator, made him an ideal companion in Yeats's psychical researches.⁶⁷ Thus, the two of them planned together an expedition to Mirebeau, near Poitiers, to investigate an alleged miracle or to witness the making of another 'religious miraculous legend'.⁶⁸ The case concerned bleeding oleographs of the Sacred Heart and the 'spiritual voices' who spoke to a certain Abbé Vachère. On that occasion they took with them Maud Gonne, to whom Yeats dictated the record of their investigation. As this record has been introduced and annotated by Professor Harper in Yeats and the Occult,⁶⁹ I shall present here only the major points of the expedition.

According to the record, Yeats, Gonne, and Feilding

arrived at Mirebeau on May 11, 1914. On the same day the Abbé gave an account of what had happened. In 1906 he was given eleven oleographs of the Sacred Heart, one of which he put over the altar of his private chapel. On September 8, 1911, while about to say Mass, he noticed three dark spots on the forehead; later on in the day he saw that they had become drops of blood. The oleograph continued to bleed for more than one month; wounds opened in the heart and on the hands, while 'a crown of thorns [showed] itself in blood upon the head'.⁷⁰ The rumour was spread, and the Abbé's house was soon filled by people who came to witness the miracle. The Abbé informed his Bishop, who asked him to take the picture to the ecclesiastical college at Poitiers to be examined. The picture was returned to the Abbé two months later, but he was told not to show it to the people any more. In the meantime, a voice had told him to build a Calvary upon a hill nearby, and he had hung a second picture in the storehouse of the masons. This oleograph had also begun to bleed.

Yeats, Gonne, and Feilding saw this picture, the face in which 'had streamed with blood ... some of the blood drops were still fresh. The Abbé took our handkerchiefs and touched them with the blood' (p. 185). At the point where the handkerchief had touched the picture there remained only the surface of the oleograph, and, after they had waited for several minutes, no new drop formed at the place of the old one. This made them sceptical. On the one hand, they had seen nothing evidential; on the other,

it was very difficult for them to accept that the Abbé, a simple and patient man who 'had been satisfied with his garden and his prayers for many years, should suddenly make a false miracle' (p. 186). To solve the problem, Yeats considered the possibility of 'somnambulistic cheating', in which Feilding was an expert. Certainly, Yeats was not convinced; he felt however that the 'miracle' had its place in 'spiritual drama', no matter what its explanation was (pp. 186-87).

Still, there had to be an explanation of some sort, so Yeats's blood-stained handkerchief was sent by Feilding to the Lister Institute in London for analysis. The answer, received by Feilding, was 'somewhat discouraging': 'An extract from the handkerchief gave no precipitate with anti-human serum', and this excluded 'the possibility of its being human blood'. Despite his eagerness to find 'irrefutable proof' that miracles did occur, Yeats had to note at the end of Maud Gonne's manuscript: 'Analysis says not human blood', accepting thus that 'the controversy was closed' (p. 175).

Conclusion

Especially from 1914 on, after the Mirebeau fiasco, 'a mode of precision, of not claiming more than is felt to be true', characterizes Yeats's unpublished records of spiritualistic phenomena. Now he is more reserved, and generally satisfied with simply putting facts on paper in short sentences, rather than with interpreting them:

Medium entered the cabinet about two minutes past nine by my watch At 9.10, Madame Bisson was still holding the medium's hands. At 9.20, she allowed the hands to rest At 9.35, nothing had happened.

(*'Seances at Madame Bisson's'*, Appendix A: 7)

If we compare, for example, the records of the Peters seances (1912) with the records of the seances held at Bisson's (1914), or of those held later on (1916), we shall see that in the first case Yeats often deals with impressions, while in the second one he deals almost exclusively with facts.

Thus, despite his declaration, at a speech in 1913, that he was 'born a believer',⁷¹ his later attitude does not suggest 'a natural believer'. It may be true that, as he stated in *'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places'* (written in 1914), he had not started visiting seance rooms to find there 'evidence of the kind the Society for Psychical Research would value', for 'like Paracelsus who claimed to have collected his knowledge from midwife and hangman, I was discovering a philosophy' (*IIWFT*, 22-23). Still, as the reader of his unpublished spiritualistic writings will see, Yeats was more and more after evidence of this kind; and when he could not find such evidence, he would not hesitate to seek the source of paranormal phenomena in the realm of consciousness. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the three major incidents discussed in this chapter resulted in a consideration of the faculties of the unconscious mind (thought-transference, secondary or multiple personality, unconscious will to cheat).

By 1916, the year that marked the official end of the

'spiritualist interlude', Yeats had not only assimilated Professor Theodor Flournoy's and Dr Joseph Maxwell's theories of 'unconscious memory',⁷² but, as we have seen, he had considered them seriously in his spiritualistic writings. Although he had started his spiritualistic career with the aspiration to fight Flournoy's view that paranormal phenomena 'are not spiritistic in reality',⁷³ he had come to consider it seriously on several occasions. Moreover, although he was not aware of Carl Gustav Jung's researches in automatic writing and in speaking in trance, or of the latter's psychological approach to such phenomena from 1905 on,⁷⁴ his writings on the subject indicate that he had come very close to Jung's views, as will be seen in Chapter 6 of this thesis. In short, his attitude had little to do with 'superstition' and 'hocus-pocus'. In view of the above, it should be also noted that, if the tendency to understand what seems unreasonable and incoherent in man's nature through psycho-analysis and its offsprings marked a considerable part of European thought in our century, Yeats's psychical researches could not have taken him far away from the ideological and methodological mainstream of his time.

Thus, if we exclude his rare declarations of belief, Yeats was never a 'spiritualist' in the full sense of the word. Spiritualism is a religious belief supported by persons who insist that spirit-visitors are in most cases what they purport to be. A spiritualist tends to choose the most 'convenient' explanation of paranormal phenomena, as he is convinced that they are usually — if not always —

due to a supernatural agent. A psychical researcher, however, considers all explanations, till he has found irrefutable evidence that one of them is true. Yeats's published and unpublished writings suggest strongly that no explanation satisfied him (except for metaphorical purposes), although he excluded none.

The above discussion should suggest that the condemnation of the 'spiritualist interlude' in toto is unjust, and that, at least as regards the majority of critics, the neglect of Yeatsian 'spiritism' is due to lack of information. Moreover, it should show that Yeats's own repudiation of spiritualism in A Vision is not as inhibiting as some have supposed. Yeats, as a 'psychical researcher', was right to condemn 'that popular spiritualism' for not going 'through a tragedy of separation and rejection' and for clinging to 'all that is vague' (V, 24).

Indeed, Yeats's 'great question' was never answered through 'demonstration and experiment'. The Mirebeau fiasco or the 'Leo Case' did not keep him from seeking such an answer and, as we saw in the previous chapter, from attending and recording more seances, till his wife offered him another 'personal laboratory situation', from 1917 on. But some sixteen years after the 'official' end of the 'spiritualist interlude' he returned to seance-rooms to attend several sittings with the famous Mrs Margery Crandon,⁷⁵ to whom I have already referred in this chapter. As he had once written to his father, 'a ... medium ... says "nothing ever satisfies" me' (Letters, 584).

N O T E S

1. Quoted in Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London, 1952, second edition 1961), p. 43.
2. Quoted in Ellmann, p. 43.
3. See her Secret Doctrine, 4th edition, 6 vols (Adyar, Madras, India, 1938), II, 395.
4. See Ellmann, p. 69.
5. Ellmann, p. 69.
6. See Colin Wilson, The Occult (Frogmore, St Albans, Herts, 1973), pages 431 and 432. See also James Webb, The Occult Underground (La Salle, Illinois, 1974), p. 81.
7. See Ellmann, p. 196, and Arnold Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 108-29 (p. 114).
8. See George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn (London and Basingstoke, 1974), p. 8, and my W. B. Yeats, Mythologies and Visions (Athens, 1983), p. 21.
9. See Goldman, note 12 to p. 113.
10. See Virginia Moore, The Unicorn (New York, 1954), p. 221. Moore cites Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930. See also Goldman, p. 114.
11. Goldman, p. 114.
12. See Moore, p. 221.
13. Moore (p. 221) says 'Apparently before 1908'.
14. Goldman, p. 114.
15. See Ellmann, p. 196, Moore, p. 222, and Joseph Hone, W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939 (London, 1942), p. 281.
16. See Goldman, p. 109.
17. Goldman also observes: 'Hone, knowing that Yeats certainly became acquainted with Margery and Dr Crandon in the latter twenties, had presumably seen references to a "Mrs C." in Yeats's papers, and assumed it was Mrs Crandon (p. 109). Moore (p. 222) cites Hone.
18. See Goldman, p. 109.
19. See p. 109.

20. See Yeats's note in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places' (IIWFT, 45): 'Besides the well-known books of Aksakof, Myers, Lodge, Flammarion, Flournoy, Maxwell, Albert de Rochas, Lombroso, Madame Bisson, Delanne, et c., I have made considerable use of the researches ... of Professor Hyslop published during the last four years in the "Journal" and "Transactions of the American Society for Psychical Research." I have myself been a somewhat active investigator.'

21. See Goldman, p. 109.

22. See Goldman, p. 111.

23. Moore (p. 219) suggests a relation between George Pollexfen's death and Yeats's interest in mediumship and spiritualism.

24. See her chapter on 'Spiritism', pp. 218-19.

25. '... I was staying with some friends in Paris. I had got up before breakfast and gone out to buy a newspaper. I had noticed the servant ... laying the table for breakfast. As I had passed her I had been telling myself one of those long foolish tales which one tells only to oneself. If something had happened that had not happened, I would have hurt my arm, I thought. I saw myself with my arm in a sling in the middle of some childish adventures. I returned with the newspaper and met my host and hostess in the door. The moment they saw me they cried out, "Why, the bonne has just told us you had your arm in a sling. We thought something must have happened to you last night, that you had been run over maybe" - or some such words. I had been dining out at the other end of Paris, and had come in after everybody had gone to bed. I had cast my imagination so strongly upon the servant that she had seen it, and with what had appeared to be more than the mind's eye.

One afternoon, about the same time, I was thinking very intently of a certain fellow-student for whom I had a message, which I hesitated about writing. In a couple of days I got a letter from a place some hundreds of miles away where that student was. On the afternoon when I had been thinking so intently I had suddenly appeared there amid a crowd of people in a hotel and as seeming solid as if in the flesh. My fellow-student had seen me, but no one else, and had asked me to come again when the people had gone. I had vanished, but had come again in the middle of the night and given the message. I myself had no knowledge of casting an imagination upon one so far away' (G & E, 44-45).

26. See, for example, Geraldine Cummins, Unseen Adventures (London, 1951), p. 33. Lily dictated to Cummins 'from a record one strange and evidential vision of hers:

*In March 1910 I had an extraordinary dream. I thought

I was floating above the earth, that there was semi-darkness and that it was a warm, damp night. Down below me, I saw a single railway line, then I saw a short, heavy train coming towards me and a woman dressed in black. I saw her with great distinctness, she wore a black golf-jersey buttoned on the shoulders and a black satin ribbon round her well-defined waist; she was a well-built woman, her clothes looked new and good. I could only see her chin as, over her face, worn as a mask, was a double thickness of gauze veil. She made a rush and deliberately threw herself under the engine. The dream shut off then. A moment later I saw her mutilated remains lying on a grass slope. The night was very dark now; I saw a white terrier come out of the thicket close by and carry away some of the remains, biting off a finger. My dream ended there. It neither shocked nor horrified me.

The next day, one of my girls at the Cuala industry, who lives at Rathfarnham, told us that a woman had been run over by the last steam tram from Blessington. I read an account of the inquest later in the newspaper. The conductor and driver stated that the woman had deliberately thrown herself under the tram. They had placed the remains on the side of the road and gone into Tallaght to tell the police. When they got back they found the remains had been further torn and parts were missing, including a finger." For more instances of Lily's parasensory experiences, see William M. Murphy, 'Psychic Daughter, Mystic Son, Sceptic Father', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 11-26 (pp. 13-22).

27. John Butler Yeats to Frank Yeats, September 8, 1920 (Coll. Harry Yeats), quoted in Murphy (see note 26 above), p. 22. Murphy notes that 'In an interview with Marguerite Wilkinson JBY attributed Lily's words to Willie: "He expects a Marconi some day in the future to explain the occult to us." Or could Miss Wilkinson have misunderstood JBY's identifications?'

28. John Butler Yeats to Frank Yeats in the same letter. Quoted in Murphy, p. 22.

29. Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 196.

30. See also Goldman, p. 114.

31. From this point on, all quotations are from 'Report of Seance' (Appendix A: 1), except if otherwise indicated.

32. This may seem a little forced, as 'Gates' and 'Yeats' ('Yates') sound very alike. Anyhow, Goldman (p. 116) suggests that 'Yeats's willingness to identify himself as "Mr Gates" may have sprung from his discoveries while attempting to establish a family coat of arms. In 1909, "for the purpose of a bookplate", Yeats had James Duncan searching on his behalf. Duncan came up with the coat of one Mary Yeats of Lifford, which Yeats described as "Per

fess embattled argent and sable. Three gates counter-charged". See also Memoirs, p. 196.

33. See W. Usborne Moore, Glimpses of the Next State (London, 1911), p. 284.

34. See Ellmann, p. 68.

35. See W. Usborne Moore, p. 497.

36. From this point on, all quotations are from the 'Leo Africanus' MS (Appendix B), except if otherwise indicated.

37. W. Usborne Moore, p. 494. As will be seen in the following chapter, it goes without question that Yeats was acquainted with W. Usborne Moore's works on 'spiritistic phenomena'.

38. On information about Leo Africanus, see, for example, 'Leo, Johannes', Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, XVI, 441, quoted in Virginia Moore, pp. 225-26.

39. See Goldman, p. 117.

40. See W. Usborne Moore, p. 415.

41. See Goldman, p. 118.

42. See Goldman, p. 111.

43. See Cummins, p. 22.

44. 'W. B. Yeats's Daimonic Memory', Sewanee Review, 85 (1977), 583-603 (p. 600).

45. 'W. B. Yeats's Daimonic Memory', p. 601.

46. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 119.

47. Theodor Flournoy, Professor of Psychology at the University of Geneva, author of Des Indes à la Planète Mars (Paris, 1900), threw 'great doubt on the ascertainability of the extra-mundane existence of the entities which communicate through mediums', but did not doubt 'realities of telekinesis, telepathy, and clairvoyance'. (Nandor Fodor, Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science (London, 1933), pp. 141-42.) Quoted in George Mills Harper and John S. Kelly, 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E[izabeth] R[adcliffe]', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 130-71 (note 10 to p. 143).

48. See note 47 above.

49. Harper and Kelly, p. 134.

50. See Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, edited by John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, 2 vols (London, 1975), II, 408.

51. Uncollected Prose, p. 408.

52. See Light, 33 (November 15, 1913), 549 (p. 549). In an unsigned article headed 'Mr W. B. Yeats a Spiritualist' there is a report 'of an address by Mr W. B. Yeats, on "Psychic Phenomena".' The address was first reported by the Dublin Daily Express of November 1. In the Light reprint we read: 'Mr Yeats said that a great store of facts had been gathered by investigators in various countries, and while the majority of scientific men rejected those facts, yet as a group the facts were accepted by a number of careful observers, and they were adequate as a foundation to one's thoughts. There were extraordinary examples of telepathy and prevision; records of apparitions at the time of death, of hauntings, of materialisations, levitation, and so on.... The facts that had been recorded tended to upset the current generalisations of the laws of physics.... He had had most amazing experiences. Indeed, he might say that, so far as he was concerned, the controversy was closed. He personally approached the subject as a believer. A man was born a natural believer or unbeliever. He (Mr Yeats) was born a believer, and he had never seriously doubted the existence of the soul or of God.' See also George Mills Harper, '"A Subject of Investigation": Miracle at Mirebeau', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 172-89 (note 6 to p. 175).

53. See Harper and Kelly, 'Preliminary Examination', in Yeats and the Occult, p. 147.

54. See 'Preliminary Examination', pp. 136-37.

55. 'Preliminary Examination', p. 171.

56. 'Preliminary Examination', p. 137: '... in revising the essay many months later he merely adds to our perplexity by offering yet another theory - that of secondary and tertiary personalities.'

57. See, for example, Virginia Moore, The Unicorn, p. 228, or Harper and Kelly, 'Preliminary Examination', p. 136.

58. Harper and Kelly, p. 136.

59. See Harper and Kelly, pp. 136-39.

60. Harper and Kelly, p. 134.

61. Harper and Kelly, pp. 149-50.

62. See Goldman, p. 121.

63. See also Goldman, p. 122.

64. Goldman, p. 122.

65. See Harper 'A Subject of Investigation': Miracle at Mirebeau', p. 175.

66. 'A Subject of Investigation', p. 177.

67. 'Feilding possessed a sense of the picturesque and of drama'. (Hone, p. 286.)

68. See Harper, 'A Subject of Investigation', pp. 172-73.

69. See note 52 above.

70. Harper, 'A Subject of Investigation', p. 183. Further references to the 'Miracle at Mirebeau' are given after quotations in the text.

71. See note 52 above.

72. '... the theory ... of the emerging of forgotten knowledge'. (Harper and Kelly, 'Preliminary Examination', p. 143.)

73. See Virginia Moore, p. 227. As Harper and Kelly note 'The prime object of Yeats's experiments was to prove that sceptics and doubters like Maxwell and Flounoy were wrong or only partially right' (note 10 to p. 143).

74. On Jung's views on spiritualistic phenomena as well as on Yeats and Jung, see below, Chapter 6.

75. See Harper, 'A Subject of Investigation', p. 179.

C H A P T E R 3

THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE AS AN EXAMPLE

"Ας καθήσουμε τώρα γύρω στο
[στρογγυλό τουτο τραπέζι
έσεῖς πού φύγατε καί μείνατε
[γιά πάντα μαζί μας
κ' ἐμεῖς πού μετατρέψαμε τήν
[ἀπουσία σας σέ παρουσία.

(Let us sit now at this round
[table,
you that are gone, but stay
[with us for ever,
and we that have transformed
[your absence into presence.)

G. T. Vafopoulos, 'The Great Being'¹

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice].
Lulu so glad to see all her friends
(W & B, 51).

If nothing ever satisfied Yeats the 'psychical researcher', Yeats the playwright could not but acknowledge the intensely dramatic character of seances. No matter whether spirit-visitors were authentic or not, their 'show' always interested him. In his writings there are several instances where he draws parallels between seances and theatrical performances. In some cases, the reference to the dramatic

character of seances is indirect: 'The control Nelly came - it was curious to watch the sudden change in the midst of a lively conversation' (Letters, 569)². But as I suggested in the Introduction (p. 3) Yeats sometimes openly regards seances as dramatic instances:

I found much that was moving, when I had climbed to the top storey of some house in Soho or Holloway, and, having paid my shilling, awaited, among servant girls, the wisdom of some fat old medium. That is an absorbing drama, though if my readers begin to seek it they will spoil it, for its gravity and simplicity depends on all, or all but all, believing that their dead are near (IIWFT, 22: my italics).

... and the dead ... become the characters in the drama we ourselves have invented (IIWFT, 50).

Because mediumship is dramatisation... (W & B, 33).

Suddenly the medium went down on the floor and sat cross-legged with a queer chattering laugh; had it been acting, it would have been excellent acting, it was as though one had an old Oriental with a touch of the monkey in front of one ('3rd Seance with Peters', Appendix A: 5).

The medium Geraldine Cummins provides further evidence in this connection. At a sitting given in the presence of Hester Dowden, Hester interrupted Geraldine's performance, asking Yeats whether the ghost story related by the medium's control interested him. Yeats replied: 'Very much. This is the plot of my new play. But I was not thinking of it when the sitting began.'³ In another account we read that Yeats's words were: 'I find it of intense interest as it is exactly the plot and drama of the play I am at present writing, and so far I have told it to no one.'⁴ At any rate, Cummins explained 'this curious instance of telepathy', saying that Yeats's presence had enabled her to utter 'aloud in his poetic language the narrative of this

drama and his new play'.⁵

If 'mediumship is dramatisation', some fifteen years after the 'official end' of the 'spiritualist "interlude"', Yeats wrote The Words upon the Window-pane, where the central episode was a dramatization of mediumship. Cummins described The Words as an 'exceedingly dramatic little play' that 'presents a seance given by an uneducated medium whose personality is suddenly transformed and becomes that of Vanessa and also of Jonathan Swiftte [sic]'.⁶ In the previous chapter we saw that, as Leo would have it, the living can stage the dreams of the dead. In The Words upon the Window-pane Yeats staged the 'Dreaming Back' of Swift and his 'Vanessa' (Esther Vanhomrigh), who speak through Lulu, Mrs Henderson's control. Here the 'horrible play' is played once again, as 'Swift's fear and loathing of procreation' is 'struggling with Vanessa's avowal of love'.⁷

Thus, two stories are blended in the structure of The Words: the story of a particular seance and the story of Swift. Commentators are often interested in the second story — in the overtly literary dimension of the play. Yet, The Words upon the Window-pane is not only a 'play about Swift'; it is also about the imaginative encounter of the dead and the living, of past and present — about the most crucial aspects of Yeats's 'spiritualistic' art. To explore some of these aspects, I shall discuss the spiritualistic sources of The Words and the means by which this encounter is made dramatically effective through Yeats's use of the device of a seance.

Perhaps the best way to present Yeats's sources is to

discuss the ways in which the dramatis personae are related to his spiritualistic encounters. Yeats notes that all characters in the play 'were people I had met or might have met in just such a seance' (W & B, 31). And Geraldine Cummins speaks of the play's 'instructive realism and ... acute cynical observation of some typical people who attend seances'.⁸ As, in his dramatization of the modern seance-room, Yeats had to resort to the naturalistic mode,⁹ he made the best possible use of characters and events that had first appeared in his records of seances.

The most obvious instance of Yeats's direct use of real characters and events is that of Abraham Johnson, the preacher who wants to communicate with the Evangelist Moody. Yeats wrote that he 'found the preacher who wanted Moody's help at a seance' (W & B, 32). The seance to which he refers is undoubtedly the sitting with Mrs Harris on July 8, 1915 (Appendix A: 9).¹⁰ In Yeats's account we read that one of the sitters was 'some sort of non-conformist preacher' who 'did not cease to cry out for Sankey'. Both Moody and Sankey are referred to in the play:

ABRAHAM JOHNSON. ... I am by profession a minister of the Gospel.... My hope is that I shall be able to communicate with the great Evangelist Moody. I want to ask him to stand invisible beside me when I speak or sing, and lay his hands upon my head and give me such a portion of his power that my work may be blessed as the work of Moody and Sankey was blessed. (W & B, 45-46)

Some fifteen years after the sitting with Mrs Harris, Yeats did not fail to see that the excitable non-conformist preacher with the thunderous voice could be successfully 'transplanted' to his play. Indeed, he went so far as to

almost repeat one of the preacher's comments in the seance.

In Yeats's record we read:

Presently Sir Alfred Turner [one of the sitters] discovered other celebrities [among the spirit-visitors] — Lawrence Irving and his wife, Cardinal Newman, Stead, and doubtfully rejected Gladstone. He is monopolising the seance said the preacher, and was reproved by Harmony [the medium's control].

In his Introduction to the play, apparently referring to the same sitting, he writes:

We sat in the dark and voices came about us in the air; crowned head after crowned head spoke until Cromwell intervened and was abused by one of the sitters for cutting off the head of 'Charles the Second,' while the preacher kept repeating, 'He [presumably Sir Alfred Turner] is monopolising the seance'. (W & B, 32-33)

In Yeats's record there are references to Cromwell and Charles II as well, only the order of events is altered in the Introduction. It is interesting, however, that in the record, in the Introduction, and in the play, Yeats insists on the preacher's comment ('He is monopolising the seance'), certainly one of the more tasteful instances which add a comic element to The Words. When one of the sitters, Mrs Mallet, is trying to communicate with her dead husband, someone is monopolizing the seance again.

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. ... Lulu sees a tall man here, lots of hair on face ... not much on the top of his head ... red necktie, and such a funny sort of pin.

MRS MALLETT. Yes.... Yes....

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. Pin like a horse-shoe.

MRS MALLETT. It's my husband.

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. He has a message.

MRS MALLETT. Yes.

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. ... He is pointing to somebody in the corner.... He says it is the bad man who spoilt everything last time....

MRS MACKENNA. That horrible spirit again.

ABRAHAM JOHNSON. Last time he monopolised the seance.

MRS MALLET. He would not let anybody speak but himself.
(W & B, 51-52)

But Yeats's debt to the sitting with Mrs Harris goes beyond the animation of a certain character or the repetition of a phrase. So far as The Words upon the Window-pane is a play about 'the ludicrous side of seances',¹¹ it reproduces the mental atmosphere of this particular, though typical, sitting.

Yeats's published and unpublished spiritualistic writings roughly divide seance-goers into two categories - the convinced and the sceptical sitters. Certainly, Abraham Johnson belongs to the first category, as do Corny Patterson and Mrs Mallet, who, as Peter Ure says, 'are slyly amusing caricatures of typical addicts'.¹² Although the majority of sitters in Yeats's records belong to the first category, even Corbet, the young sceptic writing a thesis on Swift, is immediately related to one of Yeats's seances. As I noted in Chapter 1 (pp. 27-28), on October 27, 1912, Yeats was 'visited' by three of his 'guides', one of whom 'could be nobody but William Blake'. On that occasion, Peters presented Yeats with information about Blake which impressed him greatly.

When I questioned him afterwards he assured me he knew nothing of Blake, except what he got from the reading many years ago of some of his poems, in the Canterbury poets. I noted particularly, his insistence on the excitability of the man as if this had been a cause of his practical failure, it would have needed a deeper knowledge of his life than could be got from any book of selection to have known how true this was. I doubt if an ordinary reader of Gilchrist's Life of Blake would have discovered it, and I am sure that it would not have been the fact which would have most impressed a man of Peters' type. (Appendix A: 4)

Certainly, the information given by Mrs Henderson, the uneducated medium, would not have impressed a woman of her type. Therefore, thinks Corbet, she is not uneducated, and congratulates her on her brilliant acting as well as on her deep knowledge of Swift's life:

... I have been deeply moved by what I have heard.... When I say I am satisfied I do not mean that I am convinced it was the work of spirits. I prefer to think that you created it all, that you are an accomplished actress and scholar. In my essay for my Cambridge doctorate I examine all the explanations of Swift's celibacy offered by his biographers and prove that the explanation you selected was the only plausible one. (W & B, 61)

But the medium insists that she knows nothing of Swift.

MRS HENDERSON. Who are you talking of, sir?

JOHN CORBET. Swift, of course.

MRS HENDERSON. Swift? I do not know anybody called Swift. (W & B, 61)

Mrs Henderson, however, 'proves' Corbet's thesis on Swift's celibacy in the same way that, in the 'Second Seance [with] Peters', the medium 'verifies' Yeats's views on Blake's 'practical failure' — Corbet's Cambridge doctorate is here a substitute for Yeats's 'big book on Blake'.

In his Introduction to the play, Yeats wrote: 'No character upon the stage spoke my thought' (W & B, 31). Still, Dr Trench comes very close to being a 'mouthpiece'. Geraldine Cummins says that, as Yeats 'liked to talk out his ideas and theories', which 'sometimes appeared afterwards in his published works', in this play he 'puts into the mouth of one of his characters a theory he had expounded one evening, I remember, extremely well'.¹³ Indeed, when Dr Trench foreshadows the central episode, the re-enactment of the spirits' re-living 'some passionate or tragic moment

of life', he sums up Yeats's thoughts on earth-bound spirits — thoughts which derive from the latter's reading in Swedenborg and spiritualism:¹⁴

[Spirits believe] they are still living and go over and over some action of their past lives, just as we go over and over some painful thought....
(W & B, 47)

Sometimes a spirit re-lives ... some passionate or tragic moment of life.... If I were a Catholic I would say that such spirits were in Purgatory.... Such spirits do not often come to seances unless those seances are held in houses where those spirits lived, or where the event took place. (W & B, 47-48)

Moreover, like Yeats in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places', he is eager to discover analogies between the world of spiritualism and that of literature. Instances of re-living 'some passionate or tragic moment of life' can be found, he notes, 'in the Odyssey, and ... in Eastern literature' (W & B, 48). But while Dr Trench puts literature in the service of spiritualism, Yeats puts spiritualism in the service of literature.

Mrs Henderson is the central character in the play, in the sense that she is also Swift, Vanessa, and, of course, Lulu. My endeavours to find whether she was modelled on a specific medium resulted in nothing definite. It should be noted however, that her name is that of a certain Boston medium who practised her profession in the early twentieth century. According to the information given by W. Usborne Moore, the real Mrs Henderson went into trance easily, 'after a few minutes' conversation'.¹⁵ Yeats's Mrs Henderson goes off in record time. Here similarities come to an end: the real Mrs Henderson had several guides, while Yeats's medium has only one control in the final version of the

play. In Moore's seance with the Boston medium the control was called Sunflower, while in the play it is called Lulu. On most occasions, Lulu speaks in the third person, whereas Sunflower spoke in the first. It may be, however, that at least Yeats's choice of name is related to the real Mrs Henderson. This is suggested by the fact that Dr Trench refers to another existing medium, the famous Mrs Piper: 'Mrs Piper, an American trance medium, not unlike Mrs Henderson, convinced me' (W & B, 40-41). It is possible that Yeats had met the real Mrs Henderson in Boston, at the time when he is supposed to have met 'Mrs C.', during the 1911 lecture tour in America. Of course, it may be that his choice of name is due to his reading of Moore's Glimpses of the Next State, or to mere coincidence, though, given his reference to Mrs Piper, this seems unlikely.

Certainly, Yeats's drafts of the play should be taken into account in this context.¹⁶ In the first draft ('Jonathan Swift, Scenario') the medium is 'Mrs P.' and later in the draft she becomes 'Mrs Patterson' (eventually her surname was given to one of the sitters in the play), till she is given the name Mrs Henderson in the second draft. Her control, Silver Cloud, perhaps a combination of Mrs Wriedt's Indian guide called Silvermoon and Ada Besinnet's Black Cloud,¹⁷ is 'a little American Indian girl'. The control's mannerisms in the first draft suggest, once more, how Yeats's literary choices were sometimes influenced by the drama of seance-rooms. In the first draft Silver Cloud

calls Swift a 'big chief', suggesting Yeats's direct use of 'the stage Indian' jargon often used at sittings. (Grayfeather, one of Mrs Wriedt's controls, would address spirits and sitters in words such as: 'Chief, I sorry your legs so bad', 'me telle shutte up', or 'I no kill my medium'.¹⁸)

VOICE OF SILVER CLOUD. Bad old man. Big chief once. Bad old man, [does not] know he is dead.... Used up power and Silver Cloud can do nothing. Cannot find dear ones ... if no power.¹⁹

As we saw in the previous chapter (p. 71), Leo, or 'Leo-Yeats', suggested that the dramatis personae of seance-rooms choose voices that are characteristic and imitable, such as the voice of an American Indian or the voice of 'a child always in high spirits'. Curtis Bradford suggests that Yeats changed Silver Cloud to Lulu because he wanted to avoid the former's jargon; certainly, he is right when he notes that 'when Silver Cloud calls Swift a "big chief" she is unintentionally funny at a point in the play where verbal humor is hardly in order'.²⁰ But Yeats did not altogether avoid American Indian peculiarities of speech, or, perhaps, the childish mannerisms of controls such as 'an Indian girl called "Pansy"',²¹ when he felt that verbal humour created the strange comical effect which he had so often witnessed:

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. Lulu so glad to see all her friends.

MRS MALLETT. And we are glad to have you come, Lulu.

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. Lulu glad to see new friend.

MISS MACKENNA [to John Corbet]. She is speaking to you.

JOHN CORBET. Thank you, Lulu.

MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. You mustn't laugh at the way I talk.

JOHN CORBET. I am not laughing, Lulu.
 MRS HENDERSON [in a child's voice]. Nobody must
 laugh. Lulu does her best but can't say big long
 words. (W & B, 51)

There are no stage directions to indicate that John Corbet laughed. But the 'Seance with Mrs Harris' suggests that its author felt like smiling on similar occasions, while fully aware of the drama performed before his eyes.

In view of the above, it seems that Yeats's Mrs Henderson was not modelled on any specific medium whose seances he had attended, although she derives from mediums he 'had met or might have met', such as Mrs Wriedt, Geraldine Cummins, Mrs Harris, or perhaps the real Mrs Henderson. She seems to be a 'collective medium' in the same way that Lulu seems to be a 'collective control'.

Swift is another character in the play, in the sense that he has a 'voice' and an almost autonomous existence on stage. It appears that the idea to have Swift speak through a medium is not as entirely original as it seems. Yeats once wrote: 'Swift haunts me; he is always just around the next corner.'²² So far as I know this was mental haunting: in his records of seances I have not found any spiritualistic encounter with 'Swift', 'Dean Swift', however, did speak at a seance with Mrs Wriedt on May 25, 1911, in the presence of Dr Abraham Wallace,²³ and there can be little doubt that Yeats knew of Swift's visit to Mrs Wriedt. Dr Wallace may have told him, but, at any rate, he was acquainted with W. Usborne Moore's writings on the mediumship of Mrs Wriedt where this instance is recorded.²⁴ Indeed, he must have been sorry

that, like most spirit-visitors, such as 'Galileo', 'Dante', 'John Stuart Mill', and 'Henry Irving', who also communicated through Mrs Wriedt's mediumship, 'Swift' told the sitters 'nothing ... above the general comprehension of the circle'.²⁵ On that occasion Swift's discourse was a trivial presentation of 'the benefits of spiritism' and of some aspects of 'spirit life'. His words in the play make up for the words of spirit-visitors who lack spirituality.

Swift's presence in the play is further connected with Yeats's spiritualistic involvement. In the previous chapter (p. 64) we saw that, in accordance with the principle of 'sympathy', artists from the 'other side' are drawn to artists, and poets to poets. In the context of this chapter it is worth mentioning that, in accordance with the same principle, 'a man or woman who has been pondering over the writings of some famous departed poet may be visited by that poet'.²⁶ Moreover, Swift's presence is in agreement with the theories considered by Yeats in the 'Leo Africanus' manuscript. Taking into account the theories of telepathy, cryptesthesia, and secondary personality mentioned in the previous chapter, 'Swift' may be a product of Corbet's mind, as well as Mrs Henderson's secondary personality. In short, Mrs Henderson's Swift may be a creation of one or more minds in which his spirit lives or re-lives like an image of Spiritus Mundi - a collective image of the moral and cultural values he represents in the play.

But, of course, an explanation of Yeats's Swift in terms of psychical research cannot offer a meaningful interpretation of the play, although it can be useful in assisting our awareness of Yeats's 'raw material'. However, it is important that, thanks to the successful device of the seance, Yeats manages to have Swift, and what Swift represented for Yeats, confronted with modern Ireland and with modern civilization. It is in the context of this confrontation that the device of a seance is dramatically meaningful and effective.

Until now I have been considering Yeats's dramatis personae with reference to his spiritualistic sources. Here I shall deal with two major metaphors employed by Yeats which, perhaps more than anything else, make the play a typical example of his 'spiritualistic' art.

The 'haunted house' metaphor is the first of these. A 'haunted house' is an almost indispensable ingredient of a successful ghost story. But, of course, the Dublin lodging-house is more than a scenic device which adds to the suspense of the play. As David R. Clark has suggested, the house is 'a shrine sacred to the spirit of Swift'; indeed, it is 'a symbol of Swift's life, having decayed like him, having the same memory cut into it'.²⁷ While accepting this, one can see the house is also a spiritual(istic) universe where the encounter between the old and the new order, Swift and Vanessa or Swift and 'the common run of men', takes place. It is a 'mind', as well as a spiritual

stage where opposites face each other.

It is true that Yeats's 'haunted house' is a version of what may be called 'the house-mind metaphor', as this is employed in several works, especially plays, written before or after The Words upon the Window-pane. One may easily recall Poe's 'Fall of the House of Usher', Henry James's Sense of the Past and 'Jolly Corner', as well as Ibsen's Master Builder and Rosmersholm, Shaw's Heartbreak House, Whiting's Saint's Day, Osborne's Watch it Come Down, and Berkoff's recent adaptation of Poe's tale for the stage²⁸ - to mention only a few works. In these works, buildings of every sort are meaningfully related to consciousness and function as metaphors for the minds of those who live in them or build them. Of course, Yeats did not have to be an amateur psychical researcher greatly interested in haunted houses to make use of the same metaphor. Still, his spiritualistic interests made him especially aware of the dramatic possibilities offered by it. Thus, while working in the context of a tradition, he was enabled to give the metaphor new force.

The 'haunted house' metaphor makes the play a characteristic example of Yeats's 'spiritualistic' art, as it is extended to a considerable number of his poems. As will be seen in the following chapters, the play discussed here is immediately related to the Yeatsian 'sense of the past' in poems such as 'Crazy Jane on God' ('Before their eyes a house/ ... Uninhabited, ruinous') or 'All Souls' Night' (essentially a dramatic monologue in a 'haunted

house-mind'). Indeed, the metaphor of The Words upon the Window-pane pervades that part of Yeats's work which is related to his spiritualistic interests.

The second major metaphor in the play is what Arnold Goldman has called 'the metaphor of mediumship'.²⁹ It suggests that the poet's persona is comparable to or identifiable with a medium who calls up spirits 'from the grave' (e.g. 'All Souls' Night') or assumes a sitter's role (e.g. 'An Image from a Past Life').³⁰ In The Words the metaphor does not function in any of the above ways, as a 'real' medium is present on stage. Yet, the writer is still comparable to or identifiable with her. Like the 'haunted house', Mrs Henderson functions as a link between the old and the new order; or perhaps it is apt to say that her body becomes a battlefield where spiritual enemies face each other. And, like Mrs Henderson, who moves freely in time without leaving the stage, the dramatist moves between past and present and enriches his dialectic without disturbing the classical unities of time and space.

But one may discover a further analogy between Yeats and the medium in The Words. Mrs Henderson's seance can be regarded as 'a simulacrum of an unsuccessful Yeats play'.³¹ As David R. Clark says, 'they [the audience] do not hear what they came for. They cannot understand the voice of an influence hostile to their abstractions, the argument of genius with himself.'³² The analogy is suggested almost at the beginning of the play:

MRS MALLET. What Mr Johnson says about the hostile influence is quite true. The last two seances

were completely spoilt. I am thinking of starting a tea-shop in Folkestone. I followed Mrs Henderson to Dublin to get my husband's advice, but two spirits kept talking and would not let any other spirit say a word.

DR TRENCH. Did the spirits say the same thing and go through the same drama at both seances?

MRS MALLET. Yes — just as if they were characters in some kind of horrible play. (W & B, 46)

Yet the sitters, the 'internal' audience of the medium's performance, lay down money after the seance is ended, even if it was a complete 'failure', as the audience of the play have already done. A jockey, a medium, and a playwright are paid whether they succeed or not, Cornelius Patterson would have said epigrammatically had he watched the play. Like Mrs Henderson, Yeats offers oracular riddles 'in some kind of horrible play' instead of answers to specific questions.

Certainly, Yeats's seance-play constitutes great schooling for students interested in the connection between his attachment to spiritualism and the subsequent literary output. As the full consideration of all aspects of the play which are relevant in the present context demands a short dissertation rather than a single chapter, the reader of this thesis will be invited to consider more ideas, metaphors, and motifs which pervade the play and make it a characteristic example — a simulacrum of Yeats's 'spiritualistic' art.

N O T E S

1. The Poems of G. T. Vafopoulos (Athens, 1978), p. 242.
2. See also Introduction, p. 3 above.
3. Unseen Adventures (London, 1951), p. 32. See also Geraldine Cummins, 'W. B. Yeats and Psychical Research', Occult Review, 66, no. 2 (April 1939), 132-39 (p. 133).
4. Quoted in Anne Dooley, Every Wall a Door: Exploring Psychic Surgery and Healing, Corgi Library of Psychic Exploration (London, 1975), pp. 64-65. Cummins does not give the date, but it seems that the sitting was held in 1915, for her control 'opened the proceedings with a description of an old castle which had been bought by Mr Yeats' (Unseen Adventures, p. 32). Yeats bought Tho'or Ballylee in 1915. I am not sure about the play Yeats had in mind. At any rate, Cummins's control told Yeats 'the place [the old castle] was haunted. The hauntings, as described by the control, involved in their explanation a romantic story.' But see also Joseph Hone, W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939 (London, 1942), p. 283: 'On occasions Yeats could hold a company enthralled by a good ghost story. Mr Thomas Lowinsky, the artist, has furnished me with one told at a Ricketts "Friday Evening". It contains hints and suggestions of that strange play of his latter years, Purgatory. "Centuries ago there lived in a castle in Ireland a man and wife...."'
5. Quoted in Dooley, p. 65.
6. 'W. B. Yeats and Psychical Research', p. 137.
7. See Peter Ure, Yeats the Playwright (London, 1963), p. 98.
8. 'W. B. Yeats and Psychical Research', p. 137.
9. See Ure, p. 103: 'In dramatizing the modern seance-room Yeats was forced to adopt the naturalistic mode. He seems to calculate the expectations that his audience will bring to a play about this subject....'
10. See also Chapter 1, p. 33 above.
11. See Arnold Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 108-29 (p. 128).
12. Yeats the Playwright, p. 97.
13. 'W. B. Yeats and Psychical Research', p. 135.

14. Swedenborg believed that every spirit is brought to his own society, and the 'spirit' of Thomson Jay Hudson, author of The Laws of Psychic Phenomena, said that the dead 'are often restless seeking the old life and habitations that they knew in life, even as an old man seeks the scenes of his childhood'. See W. Usborne Moore, Glimpses of the Next State (London, 1911), p. 133.

15. See Moore, p. 46.

16. See the drafts of the play in Curtis B. Bradford, Yeats at Work (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1965), pp. 219-36.

17. On Ada Besinnet, 'the famous young medium of Toledo', and her control, see Moore, Glimpses of the Next State, pp. 376-77.

18. See Moore, pages 386, 388 and 408.

19. Bradford, p. 223.

20. See Yeats at Work, p. 226.

21. See Moore, p. 377.

22. Quoted in Bradford, p. 225.

23. See Moore, pp. 415-16.

24. There can be no doubt as regards Yeats's acquaintance with W. Usborne Moore's writings on mediumship and psychical research. Yeats, who was deeply read in such matters, could not have ignored the works of the retired vice-admiral who brought Mrs Wriedt to England and wrote two books mostly about her: Glimpses of the Next State, to which I have already referred, and The Voices (London, 1913). Moreover, Yeats himself, in the 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E. R.', refers to 'Admiral Moore's book', leaving a parenthetical blank for the title, apparently not being certain whether he means Glimpses or The Voices. (See also Yeats and the Occult, pages 114 and 160.

25. Moore, Glimpses of the Next State, pages 416, 472.

26. Moore, Glimpses of the Next State, p. 494.

27. W. B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality (Dublin, 1965), p. 61. Quoted in John Rees Moore, Masks of Love and Death: Yeats as Dramatist (Ithaca and London, 1971), p. 263.

28. See Berkoff's East, Agamemnon, The Fall of the House of Usher (London, 1977). As regards the plays mentioned here, I am thinking of Aldus's house and the church in Saint's Day; the 'crazy old castle' (Aline's ancestral home) in The Master Builder; Rosmer's house in Rosmersholm;

Captain Shotover's ship-house, a house 'full of surprises', in Shaw's play; the deserted country railway station in Watch it Come Down; the decayed house of Usher with its 'bleak walls' and its 'vacant eyelike windows' in Berkoff's adaptation of Poe's tale. Of course, I am also thinking of the ruined house in Purgatory. Houses, churches, spires, a bridge and a railway station become almost emblematic in each case, become more than architectural constructions, and as central metaphors hold the plays together — at least in some of these works. See also my 'Fall of the House of Usher and Saint's Day: Isolation and Self-destruction' (unpublished M. A. paper, University of Warwick, 1978), pp. 1-2.

29. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 129.

30. See Goldman, pp. 126-27.

31. John Rees Moore, Masks of Love and Death, p. 264.

32. W. B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality, p. 76. Quoted in John Rees Moore, p. 264.

CHAPTER 4

RESPONSIBILITIES: A FIRST ATTEMPT

Even if, as Ellmann says, Responsibilities is 'the first volume to show the effects of prolonged psychical research',¹ it is true that Yeats's interest in the 'beyond' is not particularly obvious in these poems, considered as a whole. Louis MacNeice has noted that now Yeats 'is on the whole an acceptor of life', of the world we live in, 'instead of a rejecter of it'.² This is suggested in 'The Hour before Dawn' when the beggarman addresses the sleeper who feels 'all life longs for the Last Day':

'It's plain that you are no right man
To mock at everything I love
As if it were not worth the doing

You would rob
My life of every pleasant thought
And every comfortable thing,
And so take that and that.' (CP, 132-33)

Moreover, in 'The Grey Rock', 'the lasting love[s] what passes' (CP, 118). And in 'The Two Kings', a narrative poem also published in 1914 and related by MacNeice³ to the prevailing mood of Responsibilities, acceptance of this life is directly expressed:

'Never will I believe there is any change

Can blot out of my memory this life
Sweetened by death, but if I could believe,
That were a double hunger in my lips
For what is doubly brief.' (CP, 509: my italics)

With the exception of the poet's persona who feels he is 'running to paradise' in the poem under this title, in Responsibilities there is no place for crying aloud 'with ecstatic breath' the 'sweet name of Death', as in 'His Dream' of the previous volume (The Green Helmet, 1910). Here the business of living is at least as important as the business of dying. The invoked 'Prince of Chang' rarely appears in the poet's dreams; 'Father Rosicross' is, and remains, in his tomb, and, as far as the manner and 'voice' of Responsibilities go, the medium's mouth scarcely opens to put forth oracular riddles. Yet, the connection with spiritualism and its investigation through psychical research is there, and is expressed in several ways.

In Yeats: The Man and the Masks, Ellmann saw this connection in the way the poet introduces his ghosts in Responsibilities. The volume, he says,

is full of indecision about most of the matters with which it deals; Yeats introduces his ghosts cautiously, unwilling to say for sure that the ghosts of his ancestors can hear him ... or that the ghost of Parnell has revisited Dublin ... or that his dead friends among the Rhymers have achieved immortality 'The Three Beggars' and 'The Three Hermits' come to no conclusion about life or death.⁴

Indeed, the 'ifs' and 'maybe' with which Yeats addresses his ancestors, Parnell, and his dead friends of the Rhymers' Club may have something to do with his involvement in the world of psychical researchers:

Pardon, old fathers, if you still remain
Somewhere in ear-shot (CP, 113)

If you have revisited the town, thin Shade (CP, 123)

Since, tavern comrades, you have died,
Maybe your images have stood (CP, 116)

Some twenty-five years after the first publication of The Man and the Masks, Arnold Goldman, while acknowledging the relationship between Responsibilities and Yeats's attachment to the investigation of spiritualism, added that 'what Ellmann calls "indecision" is also a mode of precision, of not claiming more than is felt to be true', as the poet's '"psychical research" involved him heavily in such exact and careful formulations'.⁵

Yeats's unpublished records of seances of about the time when most of the lyrics in Responsibilities were composed, suggest precision rather than indecision. For example, the records for 1912 abound in expressions such as: 'I had the impression', 'seemingly', 'seemed', 'it is possible', 'if this is so', 'I have never been quite certain', 'not I think very decisively', 'the whole thing was somewhat confusing', 'I understood the spirit to say', 'both may have been said'. Even when Yeats makes a positive statement such as 'it [the spirit-visitor] could be nobody but William Blake', he rushes to correct his statement by adding 'if Blake it was' (Appendix A: 4).

This 'indecision' or 'precision' as regards opinions about the afterlife and the reality of the transcendental world marks neither Yeats's earlier poems, where he seems certain that

... when we die our shades will rove ...

With vapoury footsole by the water's drowsy blaze (CP, 16)
or that

[Our] heart [s] would break in two,
If [we] could see the townland
That we are riding to ... (CP, 94)

nor 'Magic', his major occult essay of 1901, where he feels he can convince his reader by resorting to overstatement. 'I once saw a young Irish woman ... cast into a profound trance, though not by a method known to any hypnotist', he asserts in that essay, as if he could have known all methods known to all hypnotists, and then adds:

I once saw a young Church of Ireland man ...
thrown in a like trance. I have no doubt that he,
too, was quite certain that the apple of Eve was
a greengrocer's apple, and yet he saw the tree
and heard the souls sighing through its branches
(G & E, 56-57: my italics)

In a record of a seance Yeats would have said that the young man seemed to have been 'thrown in a like trance' and that he gave the impression of being certain as regards the nature of the apple of Eve or the sighing souls.

Precision, exact and careful formulation, characterize Responsibilities as well as his records of seances from 1912 on. Yeats's attitude towards the supernatural and the transcendental is now more responsible.

Apart from precision, a major element which points to psychical research in this volume is the poet's preoccupation with his ancestry, the 'old fathers' addressed in 'Introductory Rhymes'. This preoccupation is already evident in 1909, when he attempted to establish a family coat of arms, but, so far as I have been able to find, is not

connected with Yeats's interest in psychical research.⁶ Moreover, none of his dead ancestors or relatives had 'visited' him at seances by December 1913, when 'Introductory Rhymes' was composed.⁷ As we saw in Chapter 1, according to his records of seances, Yeats was 'visited' by 'someone who called herself my mother' and by 'George Pollexfen', the 'astrologer', on June 6, 1914, and on July 20, 1915, respectively. But, as I said in Chapter 2, one may suggest a relationship between the deaths of John Synge (1909), and George Pollexfen (1910), on the one hand, and Yeats's 'psychical research', on the other. Even if his mother and uncle had not appeared in sittings by the time Responsibilities was published, the appearance of 'John Synge' and 'Parnell' at seances with Peters, held on October 27 and 30, 1912 (Appendix A: 5, 6), may have encouraged Yeats to address his 'old fathers' in a poem, for all his unwillingness 'to say for sure that the ghosts of his ancestors can hear him'.

It is interesting to note that the scenario of 'Introductory Rhymes' bears a vague though not insignificant resemblance to the scenario of a sitting, being an imaginative invocation of ghosts who appear 'in the mind's eye' one after another. Here are the 'Old Dublin merchant', Jervis Yeats, first of the Yeatses in Ireland; the 'Old country scholar', the poet's great-grandfather Rev. John Yeats; 'Butler', Benjamin Yeats; 'Armstrong', the mother of Jane Grace Corbet, married by Rev. William Butler Yeats, the poet's grandfather; the 'Old merchant skipper', William Middleton, the poet's great-grandfather; the 'fierce old

man', William Pollexfen, the poet's grandfather.⁸ Like a sitter, Yeats wishes to establish a meaningful relationship between himself and his dead, a sense of continuity between past and present.

Of course, Yeats did not have to be interested in spiritualism and psychical research to write 'Introductory Rhymes'. What is suggested here by the use of the mediumship metaphor is not meant as a 'proof' of any kind. It is interesting, however, that the unpublished spiritualistic material presented in the previous chapters suggests such an analogy. In this sense, 'Introductory Rhymes' may be regarded as the first of Yeats's 'seance-poems'.

'The Grey Rock' and 'To a Shade' are also dramatic monologues in which the poet uses the device of an imaginative invocation of the dead.

As regards 'The Grey Rock', I shall repeat the suggestion that the appearance of 'John Synge' in October 1912 may have encouraged Yeats to address his dead 'Companions of the Cheshire Cheese'. Moreover, it is noteworthy that, on October 30, 1912, 'Moonstone', Peters' control, assured Yeats that he was surrounded with ghosts who, though not identified in Yeats's record, remind us of the Rhymers. On that occasion, the control spoke of a 'clever but unlucky' man who 'had the credit of being a drunkard, he did good but not great work, it was fragmentary', and then added:

... how these people come round you, you
were the one man who speaks their thought,
you have their fire and yet the literary
training of a Germanic people, others had too
 much of one or the other, they say that
 you experiment much before you do anything

'great', enthusiasm for Celtic expression has cooled with reason (Appendix A: 6: my italics)

We cannot be certain that these were the control's exact words; we cannot decide on the honesty of Yeats's record. But if 'Moonstone' did speak these words, the reader who is familiar with the story of the Rhymers' Club and with the poet's relevant passages in Autobiographies will not doubt that the above extract testifies not only Yeats's leading role in that gathering of poets ('these people come round you ... the one man who speaks their thought'), but also the criticism occasionally launched against him, regarding his 'literary training':

A young Irish poet, who wrote excellently but had the worst manners, was to say ... 'You do not talk like a poet, you talk like a man of letters', and if all the Rhymers had not been polite ... the greater number would have said the same thing. (A, 166: my italics)

'Moonstone's' words must have rung a bell in Yeats's ear; thus, immediately after the control's reference to 'these people', he noted: 'They want me to let myself go to them', apparently thinking of the Rhymers. In 'The Grey Rock', in a volume where 'enthusiasm for Celtic expression' had definitely 'cooled with reason', he addresses them, and tells them a story of the Celtic gods, even if he is not sure that they can hear it:

Poets with whom I learned my trade,
Companions of the Cheshire Cheese,
Here's an old story I've remade,
Imagining 'twould better please
Your ears than stories now in fashion

Since, tavern comrades, you have died,
Maybe your images have stood,
Mere bone and muscle thrown aside,
Before that roomful or as good.

(CP, 115-16)

The connection between 'To a Shade' and Yeats's mediumistic encounters can be dealt with in more explicit terms. By the time the poem was composed (September 29, 1913), a ghost that was 'hanging about' at a sitting with Peters had already identified himself as Parnell. We have seen that the sitting was held on October 30, 1912, a year before 'To a Shade' was written; and we may as well say that the return of Yeats's 'Shade' to Dublin is directly connected with the spirit's supposed presence at Peters'. In Chapter 1 we saw that 'Parnell' referred to a symbol of three dogs, a red, a black, and a white one; these stood for 'hatred against his nation', 'indifference within', and hypocrisy of the Church, respectively. 'All the dogs were at him'; he had fought them and had 'slipped on ladder', as

The people he had worked for had not been known
as a people, they were a crowd, that is all. He
had worked for the country people, their tradition
and their rights ... he then say 'white dog of
hypocrisy and he laugh, he laugh so much' (sic;
Appendix A: 6).

In the poem there is no reference to the symbol of the three dogs. Still, 'indifference within', the 'black dog' that 'was the worst', is the target of Yeats's sad and ironic allusions. In the first paragraph of the poem, the ghost of Parnell is warned that indifference reigns in Dublin:

If you have revisited the town, thin Shade,
Whether to look upon your monument
(I wonder if the builder has been paid)
Or happier-thoughted when the day is spent
To drink of that salt breath out of the sea
When grey gulls flit about instead of men,
And the gaunt houses put on majesty:
Let these content you and be gone again;
For they are at their old tricks yet. (CP, 123)

As there is no progress to rejoice over, no one to cheer and encourage, the ghost should avoid the company of men. The loneliness of the ghost is reflected in the condition of the neglected statue ('I wonder if the builder has been paid') and stressed by the image and the alliteration of the 'grey gulls'. In the second paragraph, the cultural dangers which the 'black dog' represents for Ireland are further stressed by the use of an example showing that the dog's bite may prove deadly, as it did in Hugh Lane's case.⁹ The 'pack' set upon Hugh Lane by the 'old foul mouth' of Murphy's newspapers suggests a pack of hounds or wolves,¹⁰ the 'crowd' of Yeats's record, as do the words 'heaped upon him':

... A man

Of your own passionate serving kind who had brought
 In his full hands what, had they only known,
 Had given their children's children loftier thought
 ... has been driven from the place,
 And insult heaped upon him for his pains ...
 Your enemy, an old foul mouth, had set
The pack upon him. (CP, 123: my italics)

Like Swift in The Words upon the Window-pane, Parnell and Lane are 'driven from the place'; they are rejected by the 'natural order' of Ireland, by what Murphy's violent opposition of both meant for Yeats.¹¹ Thus, despite the symbolic victory of his return to Dublin, Parnell's ghost is asked to return to his grave in Glasnevin Cemetery:

Go, unquiet wanderer,
 And gather the Glasnevin coverlet
 About your head till the dust stops your ear ...
 You had enough of sorrow before the death —
 Away, away! You are safer in the tomb. (CP, 123)

It may be that, as Goldman has noted, 'the use of the returned ghost of Parnell to open and close the poem is at

belief that

When we are dead ... we live our lives backward
for a certain number of years, treading the paths
we have trodden ... till some attain an innocence
that is no longer a mere accident of nature....' (A, 378)

The above noted correspondence between expressions in
'The Cold Heaven' and in the relevant passages from the
essay on Swedenborg, so far unnoticed by commentators, should
provide us with the 'key' to the poem. Still, 'The Cold Heaven'
remains puzzling. Why, for example, should Yeats speak of
'the injustice of the skies', in the last line of a poem which
deals with the process of attaining innocence? It is clear,
I think, that this question cannot be answered with reference
to spiritualistic belief. Instead, as John Unterecker says,

To 'understand' the poem, one must keep firmly in
mind Yeats's treatment of his poetic material,
particularly symbolic images and scenes 'Meaning
does not exist for Yeats in sets of abstract
propositions

'The Cold Heaven' draws ... on a visionary scene
and all the felt relationships — no matter how ir-
rational — Yeats can attach to it

Yeats offers us the experience of a shattering
illumination The 'meaning' we draw from the poem,
can ... be as trivial ... or as rich ... as we choose
to make it.¹⁴

'The Cold Heaven' is 'a reservoir of possibilities';¹⁵ it
may be 'about' Yeats's love for Maúd Gonne or 'about' 'the
ethical structure of the universe',¹⁶ as 'the injustice of
the skies' suggests. Moreover, it is 'one of Yeats's greatest
poems' and 'one of the great lyrics in English' which cannot
be 'understood', or even described, without a full consider-
ation of its aesthetic quality — its imagery, structure,
and rising rhythms.¹⁷ Here it can be only regarded as a
complicated speculation about life-after-death. As such,

it is related with the intricacies of Yeats's 'psychical research', and suggests a heightened 'existential agony'.

The last poem in Responsibilities which I will connect with Yeats's spiritualistic interests is 'The Magi'. Given what we know about the poem's theme, this connection may seem unlikely. Yeats's Magi have not been satisfied by Christ's passing from earth, 'by Calvary's turbulence', for he represents a partial revelation of cosmic mystery and a partial incarnation of the divine. According to theologians and the mystery of the Trinity, the revelation is complete, but it seems that the poem suggests otherwise. As Jeffares notes, 'the Magi are unsatisfied by the birth of Christ because they represent Yeats's belief that the Christian revelation was not final', that 'Christ is uncontrollable because he is not final, he has ushered another cycle which will be succeeded by another'.¹⁸ Certainly, the poem is related to the cyclical god of the theosophists, the doctrine of the Avatara, the divine incarnation which brings with it a partial revelation.¹⁹ Moreover, it is related to the Millenarian milieu of several religious-occult sects, such as the 'Brotherhood of the New Life', with the doctrines of which Yeats was acquainted,²⁰ as well as to the cyclical conception of history, later presented in A Vision.

Still, it seems that the connection with spiritualism and psychical research is also there, for in 'The Magi' Yeats employs the mediumistic 'voice of trance',²¹ and assumes the oracular tone of a medium. Indeed, he is a 'medium' between the 'spirits' of the 'pale unsatisfied ones'

and the sitters of an imaginary seance, the readers to whom he relates his vision. The first word of the first line ('Now') gives the poem the immediacy of a mediumistic revelation:

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
 In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied
 ones
 Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
 With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
 And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
 And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once
 more,
 Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
 The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor. (CP, 141)

Here the repetition of 'all' has the hypnotic quality of an invocation. The image of the fixed eyes adds to the hypnotic effect; one can imagine that the mind's eye of the poet-'medium' is also fixed as he relates his vision.

To suggest the connection of this poem with psychical research, one may consider it with reference to other of Yeats's works which it anticipates.

The Resurrection, written a little more than a decade after 'The Magi', contains some key sentences which are interesting in relation to the poem:

What matter if it contradicts all human knowledge?...
 What if there is always something that lies
 outside knowledge, outside order? What if at
 the moment when knowledge and order seem
 complete that something appears?... What if
 the irrational return? (W & B, 125)

The Syrian's message in the play defies the logical categories of the Greek, as does the sudden encounter with a phantom whose heart is beating. It is noteworthy that the source of the phantom is Sir William Crookes' Studies in Psychical Research.²² Moreover, the conclusions to which

psychical research seemed to be leading represented, for Yeats, the possibility of a violent shock for the 'Rationalist Establishment'²³ of Victorian science, a shock analogous to that of the climax of his play. This is suggested in his Introduction to Fighting the Waves:

I once heard Sir William Crookes tell half a dozen people that he had seen a flower carried in broad daylight slowly across the room by what seemed an invisible hand. His chemical research led to the discovery of radiant matter, but the science that shapes opinion has ignored his other research that seems to those who study it the slow preparation for the greatest, perhaps the most dangerous, revolution in thought Europe has seen since the Renaissance, a revolution that may, perhaps, establish the scientific complement of certain philosophies that in all ancient countries sustained heroic art.²⁴

A reference to the last line of 'The Magi' in A Vision unites the concept of 'mystery', suggested by the phantom whose heart is beating and by the flower carried across the room by an invisible hand, with the cyclical conception of history, with revolution, the turn of the wheel: 'When the old primary becomes the new antithetical The world of rigid custom and law is broken up by "the uncontrollable mystery upon the bestial floor"' (V, 105).

The recently published essay Yeats wrote after visiting Mirebeau, where he investigated the mystery of the bleeding oleographs, is also relevant. In that essay, written some eight months after the poem was composed, there is an echo of the last line of 'the Magi': 'The parish priest may even be a little indignant at this mystery which is so ... uncontrollable'²⁵ (my italics).

In all the above instances it seems that the triumph

of 'mystery' is that, despite 'the bestial floor', 'the natural order', it remains 'uncontrollable'. To borrow Maud Bodkin's phrase, spiritual mystery is 'uncontrollably rising anew'²⁶ ('Now as at all times'). Mystery, Yeats felt, was as disturbing for the 'Rationalist Establishment', 'the science that shapes opinion', as for 'the Church which never encourages a miracle till it has won the people over to it'.²⁷ Indeed, it seems that in 'The Magi' Yeats aims at both the dogma of the Church (the doctrine of Christ's final revelation) and the tenets of the 'Rationalist Establishment' (scientific laws can give a satisfactory description of the world we live in, of 'the bestial floor').

The object of the Magi's quest is the spiritual, the uncontrollable, the miraculous, which defies definition and 'external reality'. For Yeats, such was the aim of theosophists, magicians of all sorts, and, especially, spiritualists and psychical researchers.

By the time Yeats was attached to spiritualism and psychical research, Madame Blavatsky had already stressed the 'uncontrollability' of mystery in her Secret Doctrine.²⁸ Passing from Blavatsky to Aleister Crowley, Somerset Maugham's 'Magician', whom Yeats had met as a member of the Golden Dawn,²⁹ we find a similar declaration of the 'uncontrollability' of mystery. In his Astrological Writings we read:

The materialistic school of philosophy has endeavoured to give the impression that we possess some real knowledge of the nature of the forces which we see at work around us. Such an impression is entirely false. All forces are essentially mysterious.³⁰

But these were words. In the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena through psychical research Yeats saw the most important step in the direction of establishing this 'uncontrollability', 'now that the flower has crossed our rooms'. Spiritualists were seeking and believed they were experiencing 'mystery' in 'materializations', 'levitations', 'apparitions', 'speaking in tongues', and other phenomena that challenged the validity of 'the science that shapes opinion' regarding the behaviour of matter 'on the bestial floor'. As for psychical researchers, who dealt with 'telepathy', 'telekinesis', or 'precognition', Yeats felt that they suggested 'the poverty of the human intellect', its inability to control phenomena in which the psyche seemed to be a source of cosmic mystery in itself, what Jung called a 'cosmic principle', rather than a mere epiphenomenon of biochemical processes.

In view of the above, it seems that the Magi's quest is the poetic quintessence of this search for mystery 'on the bestial floor' — in the same way that it is Yeats's poetic reply to 'educated humanism' and to the 'myth' of progress.

To summarize: even if in Responsibilities Yeats 'is on the whole an acceptor of [this] life',³¹ the connection with spiritualism and psychical research is there, and it is more important than is often acknowledged, providing as it does a useful link between some of Yeats's major spiritualistic motifs, moods, and devices which, from this volume on, characterize a significant part of his work. In

'Introductory Rhymes', 'The Grey Rock', and 'To a Shade' this link is suggested by his records of seances, as well as by his use of the mediumship metaphor. In 'The Cold Heaven' and 'The Magi', where biographical evidence is lacking, it is suggested by analogy.

N O T E S

1. Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London, 1949, second edition 1961), p. 205.

2. 'Responsibilities', in Critics on Yeats, edited by Raymond Cowell (London, 1971), p. 32. Reprinted from The Poetry of W. B. Yeats (London, 1967), pp. 102-08.

3. 'Responsibilities', p. 30.

4. See p. 205.

5. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), p. 122.

6. See Yeats's Memoirs, p. 196 and Goldman, p. 116.

7. All dates of composition of the poems are according to Ellmann's 'reasonably accurate' chronology in The Identity of Yeats (London, 1954, second edition 1964), pp. 287-94.

8. On the identity of Yeats's 'old fathers' see also W. B. Yeats, Selected Poetry, edited by A. Norman Jeffares (London, 1962, second edition 1974), pp. 212-13.

9. On Hugh Lane's case with reference to the poem see also John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats (London, 1959), pp. 119-20.

10. See Unterecker, p. 119.

11. See Unterecker, p. 119.

12. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 126.

13. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 125.

14. A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats, pp. 127-28.

15. See Unterecker, p. 128.

16. See Unterecker, p. 128.

17. For such a consideration see Peter Ure, Yeats (London, 1963), pp. 57-59.

18. A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (London, 1968), p. 148.

19. Of course, Yeats could as well have found this doctrine in its original and much more engaging version, in Krishna's exposition of it to Arjuna.

20. See for example Yeats's references to Andrew Jackson Davis, the American shoemaker's clerk who had declared the imminence of the New Age, and to the schismatic Swedenborgian Thomas Lake Harris, whose 'Brotherhood' would concern itself with the Second Coming, in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places' (IIWFT, 39042, 63).

21. In 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' (p. 126) Goldman writes: 'Yeats did rely in part on the spiritualistic voice ... as he moved from absence to fulness of visionary power.'

22. See also Peter Ure, Yeats the Playwright (London, 1963), p. 126.

23. Consider James Webb's use of the term with reference to Victorian science in The Occult Underground (La Salle, Illinois, 1974).

24. W. B. Yeats: Selected Criticism, edited with an Introduction and notes by A. Norman Jeffares (London, 1964, second edition 1976), p. 210.

25. See George Mills Harper, '"A Subject of Investigation": Miracle at Mirebeau', in Yeats and the Occult, p. 182.

26. Studies of Type-Images in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy (London, 1951), p. 108: '... the mystery of the Divine for ever entering the world, for ever obscured, destroyed, yet uncontrollably rising anew.'

27. '"A Subject of Investigation": Miracle at Mirebeau', p. 182.

28. See Chapter 2, p. 53 above.

29. On Yeats and Aleister Crowley see George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn (London and Basingstoke, 1974), pp. 23-25 and 30-31.

30. The Complete Astrological Writings, edited with annotations by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant (London, 1976), p. 21.

31. See above, note 2.

CHAPTER 5

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE: GHOSTLY PRESENCES

The second poem in The Wild Swans at Coole (1919), 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory', presents us with a characteristic example of Yeats's use of the mediumship metaphor in the works that followed Responsibilities. This poem, written in May and June 1918,¹ memorializes Lady Gregory's son who was killed in the war, while in action over Italy, in January of that year. It starts with two conversational stanzas in which the newly married poet speaks to his bride about the complexities of inviting friends to their 'house', the Norman tower in Galway, where they are 'almost settled':² couples sometimes quarrel when 'the new friend meet[s] the old / And we are hurt if either friend seem cold'. Still, now the friends are not invited; being dead, they are invoked before the mind's eye, so they cannot 'set us quarrelling':

I

Now that we're almost settled in our house
I'll name the friends that cannot sup with us
Beside a fire of turf in th' ancient tower,
And having talked to some late hour
Climb up the narrow winding stair to bed:
Discoverers of forgotten truth
Or mere companions of my youth,

All, all are in my thought to-night being dead.

II

Always we'd have the new friend meet the old
 And we are hurt if either friend seem cold,
 And there is salt to lengthen out the smart
 In the affections of our heart,
 And quarrels are blown up upon that head;
 But not a friend that I would bring
 This night can set us quarrelling,
 For all that come into my mind are dead. (CP, 148)

Having set down the 'rules of the game', Yeats moves into a list of the invoked dead, each of whom suggests a quality that the gifted Major Gregory possessed. Lionel Johnson, who 'comes first to mind', was a scholar, like Robert Gregory, whose 'mind outran the horses' feet'; John Synge, who comes next, shared the Major's love of simplicity;³ then follows 'old George Pollexfen', whose horsemanship was as impressive as the young man's:

III

Lionel Johnson comes first to mind,
 That loved his learning better than mankind,
 Though courteous to the worst; much falling he
 Brooded upon sanctity
 Till all his Greek and Latin learning seemed
 A long blast upon the horn that brought
 A little nearer to his thought
 A measureless consummation that he dreamed.

IV

And that enquiring man John Synge comes next,
 That dying chose the living world for text
 And never could have rested in the tomb
 But that, long travelling, he had come
 Towards nightfall upon certain set apart
 In a most desolate stony place,
 Towards nightfall upon a race
 Passionate and simple like his heart.

V

And then I think of old George Pollexfen,
 In muscular youth well known to Mayo men
 For horsemanship at meets or at racecourses,
 That could have shown how pure-bred horses
 And solid men, for all their passion, live
 But as the outrageous stars incline
 By opposition, square and trine;
 Having grown sluggish and contemplative. (CP, 148-49)

Knowing that the 'spirits' of John Synge and George Pollexfen⁴ (and perhaps Lionel Johnson) had already visited the poet, one may be right to suppose that Yeats's selection of the three personalities whose partial visions complemented each other in the vision of Robert Gregory ('Soldier, scholar, horseman') was partly influenced by his mediumistic encounters.⁵ The reader will remember that on October 30, 1912, 'Moonstone' told Yeats that he was surrounded with ghosts, one of whom was an 'unlucky' man who 'did good but not great work' and 'had the credit of being a drunkard'. It may be that the control's description reminded Yeats of Lionel Johnson,⁶ to whose heavy drinking he refers indirectly in the poem. (Johnson is described as 'much falling'.) The reader will also remember 'John Synge's' appearance in a sitting with Peters held on October 27, 1912:

He [Peters] then ... said he got a man who had quick thoughts and was in the midst of anxiety before he died ... a man who had not been wholly appreciated and who knew he was going to die He then went on, 'he was somewhat reserved, and he has been very anxious to get back, his work was unfinished, he used to have some doubts as to whether we survived death' (I suddenly recognized John Synge but said nothing) ... 'he is here, he wants to say that we do survive death ... he wanted to set up a continuous communication.... Are the initials "J. S." or "J. S. S.?"' I told him that J. S. was correct. (Appendix A: 5: my italics)

It is interesting - 'though not exactly evidential', as Yeats would have said - that Synge, who in the record is 'very anxious to get back' and wants 'to set up a continuous communication', in the fourth stanza of the poem 'never could have rested in the tomb'. As for 'old George Pollexfen',

whose invocation in the fifth stanza is accompanied with astrological allusions to 'opposition, square and trine',⁷ we remember that on July 20, 1915, the 'spirit' of 'the astrologer' assured Yeats that the 'magical work' they had done together had helped him in the afterlife.

Of course, Yeats did not write this poem with his old records of seances before him; but, in view of what was said in the previous chapter, we may regard 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' as another 'seance-poem'. Like 'Introductory Rhymes', it bears a vague resemblance to the scenario of a sitting, being a poetic invocation of ghosts 'that come into my mind' one after another (stanzas III-V). But unlike 'To a Shade', this invocation avoids a 'too purposeful and too facetious' return of ghosts: the poet employs the mediumship metaphor in a manner that is at once more discreet and more effective. Here the return of Lionel Johnson, John Synge, and George Pollexfen is not undermined by the use of 'if', for it takes place 'in my mind'.

At the same time, this 'Major Gregory' poem presents us with Yeats's first poetic use of the 'house-mind' metaphor, as discussed in Chapter 3. Here the dead friends that the poet 'would bring' to 'our house' 'come into my mind'. Like a gothic castle or a haunted house, Thoor Ballylee, in itself a metaphor for the poet's mind, welcomes its honoured guests, 'Discoverers of forgotten truth' (stanzas I and II).

Yeats regarded 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' as one of his best poems;⁸ as we shall see in Chapter 8, it

may be regarded as his best draft of 'All Souls' Night', his 'seance-poem' par excellence.

'Shepherd and Goatherd', another 'Major Gregory' poem is directly related to Yeats's spiritualistic interests. Here the personae mourn the young man's death; but, towards the end of the poem, the Goatherd, who has 'measured out the road that the soul treads / When it has vanished from our natural eyes', and, like Yeats at the age of fifty-three, has 'talked with apparitions' (CP, 162), sees a supernatural pattern by which the Major's death is the starting point of a process leading to rebirth and innocence:

'He grows younger every second ...
 Jaunting, journeying
 To his own dayspring,
 He unpacks the loaded pern
 Of all 'twas pain or joy to learn,
 Of all that he had made.
 The outrageous war shall fade;
 At some old winding whitethorn root
 He'll practise on the shepherd's flute,
 Or on the close-cropped grass
 Court his shepherd lass,
 Or put his heart into some game
 Till daytime, playtime seem the same;
 Knowledge he shall unwind
 Through victories of the mind,
 Till, clambering at the cradle-side,
 He dreams himself his mother's pride,
 All knowledge lost in trance
 Of sweeter ignorance.'

(CP, 162-63)

Certainly, 'the soul's progression after death back through its own infancy to a sort of oversoul' is related to Asia's song in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound,⁹ and to 'the Platonic material [Yeats] and his wife were examining in the early notes for A Vision'.¹⁰ Still, it is also related to Yeats's reading on Swedenborg and spiritualism, as discussed in the previous chapter with reference to 'The Cold Heaven'.

There we saw that in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places', written at the highest point of his spiritualistic involvement,¹¹ Yeats presented the Swedenborgian view that in death 'all the pleasures and pain of sensible life awaken again and again, all our passionate events rush up before us', till we begin 'to change', 'to quicken', till we attain innocence. As 'Shepherd and Goatherd' is less puzzling than 'The Cold Heaven', the Goatherd's song is in perfect accordance with Yeats's 'belief' that when we are dead we live our lives backward, 'till some attain an innocence that is ... the human intellect's crowning achievement' (A, 378). Robert Gregory 'unpacks the loaded pern / Of all 'twas pain or joy to learn' ('pleasures and pain'): he plays 'the shepherd's flute' again and courts 'his shepherd's lass' till he is 'Jaunting, journeying / To his own dayspring', like Swedenborg's angels who move towards 'the day-spring of their youth'¹² — or till the metal of doctrine is 'quicken'd' by the gold of the last rhyming couplets:

... clambering at the cradle-side,
 He dreams himself his mother's pride,
 All knowledge lost in trance
 Of sweeter ignorance.'

Unlike the 'Major Gregory' poems, the lyrics related to Maud Gonne in this volume ('A Thought from Propertius', 'Broken Dreams', 'A Deep-sworn Vow') are not connected with Yeats's spiritualistic interests. 'Presences', however, suggests the imagery and the deeply felt sounds, the atmosphere of mediumistic encounters:

This night has been so strange that it seemed
 As if the hair stood up on my head.
 From going-down of the sun I have dreamed
 That women laughing, or timid or wild,
In rustle of lace or silken stuff,
 Climbed up my creaking stair....
 They stood in the door and stood between
 My great wood lectern and the fire
 Till I could hear their hearts beating:
 One is a harlot, and one a child ...
 And one, it may be, a queen.

(CP, 174: my italics)

A Freudian critic may find an amazing quantity of sexual symbolism in this short poem;¹³ but, as far as I am concerned, the three women resemble apparitions, irresistible ghostly presences. In the rustle of lace and silk they invade the poet's 'house-mind' in a night so 'strange' as to make his hair stand up on his head. On the surface, 'Presences' is limited to the imaginary return of 'a harlot' who, pretending to be with child, hoped to trap Yeats into marriage,¹⁴ Iseult Gonne ('a child'), and Maud ('a queen'). But the images and especially the rustling and creaking sounds which determine the atmosphere suggest another 'seance' held before 'the mind's eye', 'between / My great wood lectern and the fire'; the 'house-mind' is haunted by memories that appear as fascinating and as frightful as a 'laughing', a 'timid', and a 'wild' ghost. The use of the mediumship metaphor in this poem suggests that Yeats's spiritualistic involvement influenced the aesthetic quality of works that seem to have nothing to do with his interest in the 'beyond'.

'In Memory of Alfred Pollexfen' is another instance of 'digging' for the dead in Yeats's work. After the memorials in Responsibilities and in the 'Major Gregory' poems,

Yeats recapitulates the dead Pollexfens (William, George, John, and finally Alfred)¹⁵ in what may be regarded as another 'seance' held before 'the mind's eye'.

However, the only element which definitely points to Yeats's psychical interests can be found in the last four lines:

At all these death-beds women heard
A visionary white sea-bird
Lamenting that a man should die;
And with that cry I have raised my cry. (CP, 177)

In 1900, just before Susan Pollexfen died, Lily, the 'psychic' of the family, had a prophetic dream: 'a white sea-bird was "flapping its wings" in her face'.¹⁶ The bird re-appeared a few weeks later, just before Uncle John Pollexfen died 'suddenly and unexpectedly, in Liverpool'.¹⁷ In 1910 Lily dreamed again of the visionary bird, and in September Uncle George Pollexfen died as well.¹⁸ In February 1913 the bird visited her sister Lollie, who 'woke with a scream and said there was a great wingless bird in her room, a penguin, she thought', and the following night Lily felt 'sure there was a sea-swallow on the table by my bed':¹⁹ this time the bird's appearance had announced the death of Uncle William Middleton Pollexfen in that month, in a Nottingham madhouse.²⁰ The coincidences were startling for Yeats, as they are for mathematicians, psychologists, or psychical researchers who delight in the 'chancefulness' of incidents, in probabilities or permutations.²¹ But here it should be noted that, apart from their psychical interest, these coincidences reminded Yeats of his first realization of death, as described in Reveries over Childhood and Youth:

... my father and mother and my two brothers and my two sisters were on a visit. I was in the library when I heard feet running past and heard somebody say in the passage that my younger brother, Robert, had died. He had been ill for some days.... Next day at breakfast I heard people telling how my mother and the servant had heard the banshee crying the night before he died. It must have been after this that I told my grandmother I did not want to go with her when she went to see old bed-ridden people because they would soon die. (A, 27)

Indeed, it seems that the last four lines of the poem combine Yeats's first and painful realization of death with his subsequent use of 'psychic' symbolism.

N O T E S

1. According to Ellmann's 'Chronology of the Composition of the Poems' in The Identity of Yeats (London, 1954, second edition 1964), p. 289.

2. See also John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats (London, 1959), pp. 132-33.

3. See also Unterecker, p. 133.

4. See Chapter 1, pages 29 and 34 above, and Appendix A: 5, 10.

5. Unterecker says: 'The three Yeats lists before he comes to Major Gregory are carefully selected, for each has achieved a partial vision of that reality which, Yeats suggests, Robert Gregory saw whole' (p. 133).

6. In 'Peters' Seance' (Appendix A: 6) 'Moonstone' said 'this man was Irish', but this does not exclude Lionel Johnson, who 'belonged to a family that had, he told us, called itself Irish some generations back' (A, 221).

7. See also Unterecker, p. 134: 'George Pollexfen's astrological calculations "By opposition, square and trine" were achieved by examination of the "aspects" of constellations of the Zodiac at 180° (opposition), 90° (square), and 120° (trine)....'

8. See Unterecker, p. 133.

9. Unterecker, p. 137.

10. Unterecker says: 'Yeats grafts the Platonic material he and his wife were examining in the early notes for A Vision onto a form modelled, as he told Lady Gregory, "on what Virgil wrote for some friend of his and on what Spenser wrote of Sidney"' (p. 137).

11. I should remind the reader that this essay was dated 14 October, 1914.

12. See also Unterecker, p. 138: the Goatherd 'has seen in vision Swedenborg's angels which, as Yeats pointed out ... "move perpetually ... towards 'the day-spring of their youth.'" His song - explicating some of the more intricate material in A Vision - is concerned with what Yeats ultimately called the "dreaming back" process by which a soul was reincorporated into the eternal flux from which it had first sprung. Death in such a system is an unwinding of the spool; at the top of the gyre of life, dead, one spirals down - reversing time - in the narrowing circles of an inner cone. Yeats wanted no one to miss this idea,

and he carefully prepared a note that would explain that "'per'n' was another name for the spool, as I was accustomed to call it, on which thread was wound." Dead Robert Gregory, consequently, will work merrily backwards, "Jaunting, journeying, To his own dayspring", from death towards birth....'

13. It seems strange that Brenda S. Webster, in Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study (London and Basingstoke, 1974), missed the sexual symbolism of 'Climbed up my creaking stair', 'As if the hair stood up', or of 'lace or silken stuff'.

14. See Unterecker, p. 143.

15. Unterecker, pp. 143-44: '... old William Pollexfen, Yeats's grandfather, who was buried by his wife in St. John's Churcyard; George Pollexfen, Yeats's uncle, whose grand Masonic funeral, formal and ceremonious - eighty Masons actively participated - seemed to Yeats right treatment for a much-loved man; "lost" John Pollexfen; and Alfred himself'.

16. See William M. Murphy, 'Psychic Daughter, Mystic Son, Sceptic Father', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 11-26 (p. 16).

17. Murphy, p. 16.

18. Murphy says that 'Lily also thought she heard the banshee wail a day earlier' (p. 16, note 15).

19. Quoted in Murphy, p. 16.

20. See also Murphy, pp. 16-17.

21. The term is used to denote the falling of chance groupings or series within the limits of probability. But see the discussion of 'chancefulness' and 'synchronicity' in the following chapter. In this connection see also Murphy, p. 22, note 23.

· C H A P T E R 6

'EGO DOMINUS TUUS':

YEATS, LEO AFRICANUS, AND THE PROCESS OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION

The real Demian, however, looked like this —
stone, age-old, animal-like, stone-like....

I became conscious of a strange impression as
I sat before the completed picture. It resembled
a kind of god-image or sacred mask, half-male,
half-female, ageless....

It appeared to know me as a mother, as its
eyes had been fixed on me all my life.

I only need to bend my head over the black
mirror to see my own image which now wholly
resembles him, my friend....

Hermann Hesse, Demian¹

Daimon = that which completes unity of being.

W. B. Yeats, note at the top
of page 215 of Henri Bergson's
Matter and Memory.

It is generally agreed that the encounter with 'Leo Africanus'
the geographer, traveller, explorer, and Yeats's 'opposite',
proved to be a factor of paramount importance in the evolution of Yeats's 'best known "myth"', his doctrine of the Mask, and anticipated the historical-metaphysical formulations that followed. Nevertheless, the nature of Leo's

relationship to the subsequent literary output has not been fully established: the 'communication' between the poet and his 'opposite' is still regarded as a 'private' episode even if it is admitted to be of significant literary consequences. But far from being another instance of Yeatsian eccentricity, the Leo-Yeats 'affair' has a wide poetic and psychological relevance and is of greater importance than the mediumistic encounters discussed in the previous chapters. As I suggested in the Introduction (p. 17), it fits into an 'archetypal pattern' of psychic activities, 'the process of self-transformation', variably called 'the process of psychic transformation' or 'the process of individuation' by Jungian psychologists and literary critics. In this chapter I will trace the path which, starting from Leo's first appearance, leads to a significant literary expression of this pattern in 'Ego Dominus Tuus', another poem from The Wild Swans at Coole.

By 'the process of self-transformation' Jung meant the gradual discovery of 'a creative middle way between the opposites, a living integration of consciousness and the unconscious'.² In other words, the goal of this process is the expansion of the field of consciousness, the maturation and enlargement of personality, as a result of a creative contact between the ego and the 'opposite' forces of the unconscious.

As I said in the Introduction, 'Ego Dominus Tuus' and some of Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic writings are dramatizations of this process. But this does not mean that

full acceptance of the Jungian postulates is necessary on the reader's part. As my intention is to 'translate' Yeats's seemingly 'private' symbolism into a language that is perhaps more 'in tune' with the consciousness of our time, Jungian psychology is here a 'secondary language', a 'meta-language', as Roland Barthes would have it.³

In Chapter 1 I presented the documents connected with the Leo-Yeats encounter, and in Chapter 2 I discussed the details of this 'strange' affair. Still, a short résumé may be useful.

The reader will remember that the voice of 'Leo Africanus' was first heard on May 12, 1912, during a seance with Mrs Wriedt. As the 'spirit's' voice was at first too loud for Yeats to understand, Etta Wriedt, who, unlike other mediums, did not fall (or did not pretend to fall) into a trance, had to explain that the voice had come for 'Mr Gates'. Yeats said: 'this was evidently me'. The voice then became more distinct and said 'that it had been with me from childhood'. Moreover, it identified itself as that of 'Leo, the writer, you know Leo, the writer'. Yeats wrote a report in which he attempted to explain the meaning of Leo's appearance in astrological terms: 'It is possible that Leo may turn out to be a symbolic being.'

Eventually Yeats checked the facts concerning Leo Africanus and read an English translation of the latter's Descrizione dell' Africa. 'Leo Africanus' or 'Johannes Leo' had travelled much; his life had been adventurous;

he had been captured by pirates; he was a man of action, 'for me no likely guide'. Still, Yeats eventually found that Leo had also been 'a distinguished poet'.

The latter discovery excited Yeats's desire for further contact with Mrs Wriedt's control. When Leo re-appeared through another medium he said that Yeats should express his doubts and 'difficulties' in a letter. Yeats, again, should answer as if he were Leo. Leo would 'overshadow' him; he was the poet's opposite, his 'antithesis', and 'by association' they 'should each become more complete'.

Eventually Yeats followed the control's advice. 'Leo' wrote that he had shared in Yeats's 'joys and sorrow', and that he was the poet's 'Interlocutor', being 'all things furthest from your intellect'. But Yeats is 'not convinced that in this letter there is one sentence that has come from beyond my own imagination'. Yet Leo's explanation of his existence is more interesting than that: 'We are the unconscious as you say', but 'do not doubt that I was also Leo Africanus the traveller'. Thus, 'Leo' demands an autonomy which, at least at this point, Yeats cannot or does not want to grant him.

Goldman says:

Concerned for some years that his dramatis personae might only be fragments of himself, that the conflicts he posited in drama and verse were only intra-psychic shadow-boxing — 'rhetoric' not 'reality' in another of his formulations — Yeats was perhaps hoping that spiritualism would put him in touch with something outside himself, reduce the merely egocentric.⁴

But Leo did not have to be a ghost to help Yeats in his attempt to transcend the limitations of his ego-personality;

and help he did. To quote from Goldman again: 'Leo ... was a step in the invention of a larger systematization of masks, opposites and antitheses ... all meant in part to rescue the poet from mere subjectivity'⁵ (my italics). The fact that Yeats's poetic evolution was greatly affected by his encounter with Leo makes the question of Leo's identity and the explanation of the Leo-Yeats 'affair' more urgent.

It is unfortunate that our only information about the Leo-Yeats encounter comes from Yeats's unpublished records. As I explained in Chapter 2, these records do not suggest that Leo was a spirit-visitor. At the same time there is not any evidence that Leo was the product of a 'conspiracy' between the two mediums through which he appeared. Thus, if conscious or unconscious fraud (on the mediums' part) is ruled out, the 'chancefulness'⁶ of the episode seems remarkable indeed, for there was an unlimited number of things that the Leo-control could have said apart from claiming that he was Yeats's 'opposite'. In the context of Yeats's formulation of the doctrine of the Mask, and given that since 1907 he had been striving with The Player Queen ('at that time the thought I have set forth in Per Amica Silentia Lunae was coming into my head'⁷), Leo's claim that, 'if associated with him', Yeats would 'have perfected Nature', that 'by association with one another we should each become more complete', made too much sense. To talk about 'mask' is one thing, and to be suddenly confronted with it is another. The coincidence reminds one of

those coincidences regarded by Jung as 'meaningful'; in the context of Per Amica Silentia Lunae, 'accident is destiny'.

In the light of Jung's investigation of paranormal phenomena one can venture to say that Leo was not a ghost any more than his appearance was a chance event. Indeed, Leo's appearance can be regarded as an 'exteriorization phenomenon'. Jung has observed that 'constellated unconscious contents often have a tendency to manifest themselves outwardly somehow or other' (CW, XVIII, 322).⁸ In this sense, Yeats's wish for a supernatural, objective rather than 'psychological' or subjective definition of the 'mask', his wish to transfer an 'internal and psychological' conflict to the level of 'an external battle between ... this world and the next',⁹ stands for the inner content of the outward manifestation.

But let me illustrate 'exteriorization' by an example. As Jung was interested in Freud's views on parapsychology, he visited him in Vienna and asked him 'what he thought of these matters'. Freud

rejected the entire complex of questions as nonsensical, and did so in terms of so shallow a positivism that I had difficulty in checking the sharp retort on the tip of my tongue....

While Freud was going on this way, I had a curious sensation. It was as if my diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot — a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right next to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing the thing was going to topple over on us. I said to Freud: 'There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorisation phenomenon.'

'Oh come,' he exclaimed. 'That is sheer bosh.'

'It is not,' I replied. 'You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that

in a moment there will be another loud report!'
 Sure enough, no sooner had I said the words than
 the same detonation went off in the bookcase.¹⁰

If one is prepared to acknowledge the factuality of so-called 'occult' phenomena, to recognise their psychological significance (as Freud eventually did¹¹), and to accept that the loud reports of which Jung speaks in his Memories, Dreams, Reflections was a 'catalytic exteriorisation phenomenon' caused by the father-son (Freud-Jung) conflict,¹² the exteriorization hypothesis will not appear far-fetched in our case. And if one wants to pursue it any further (taking the risk of a false generalization), one can find some supporting evidence. One may consider, for example, the testimony of the medium Geraldine Cummins in The Occult Review for April 1939 that 'Mr Yeats had a remarkable influence on a seance and undoubtedly had a great capacity for conveying thought to controls.'¹³ One may also consider a number of experiments with mediums which suggest that so-called 'direct voices' originate from the sitters, as Yeats suspected when he wrote that 'at most seances the suggestions come from sub-conscious or unspoken thought' (W & B, 32). In this connection, the fact that during an experimental sitting of seven deaf mutes with Mrs Wriedt no voices were heard is challenging,¹⁴ as is the following passage from Yeats's 'Report of Seance', written on the occasion of Leo's first appearance:

I had ... the impression that [Leo's] Irish accent was not quite true. The kind of accent an Irishman some years out of Ireland, or an Englishman who had a fair knowledge of Ireland, might assume in telling an Irish story.

One of the sitters, however, told me that she considered the accent like my own, and not stronger than mine. I had thought it stronger. I asked the Medium the meaning of this Irish accent. She replied that the control had to get its means of expression from my mind. (Appendix A: 1)

Of course, the above evidence is not conclusive. Still, the specific interest of the exteriorization hypothesis in our case does not lie in its proof, but in the fact that it brings together Yeats's previous preoccupation with the concept of the 'mask' and Leo's appearance to Yeats as the two sides of a single meaningful event.

Jung's investigation of 'paranormal' phenomena convinced him that 'the usual spiritualistic communications are as a rule nothing but very ordinary products of the personal unconscious (CW, VIII, 316), that is exteriorization phenomena. Yet his research also convinced him that there were 'a few exceptions' to the rule - as when communications had 'a much profounder content than usual', and 'archetypal ideas' were produced in their course (CW, VIII, 316). As M. -L. von Franz notes, this is the case with 'meaningful coincidences' ('synchronistic events',¹⁵) which 'almost invariably accompany the crucial phases of the process of individuation'.¹⁶

Surely, the connection between Yeats's personal unconscious and Leo's appearance seems obvious enough. But the content of the communication and the turn things took after it make the episode more interesting than that. The Leo-Yeats (as well as the anti-self-Ille) relationship also has a character that is archetypal. One can diagnose

an 'underlying archetype' which manifests itself 'simultaneously in inner and external events',¹⁷ in Yeats's interest in 'mask', in Leo's appearance, and in the subsequent literary output. This underlying archetype or 'trend' points towards a representation of the motif of rebirth.

Psychic transformation can be experienced in a number of ways, two of which are relevant here: 'enlargement of personality' and 'inner transformation and rebirth into another being' (CW, IX(i), 120, 130-31). Jung describes the relationship with that 'other being' as follows:

This 'other being' is the other person in ourselves — that larger and greater personality maturing within us.... we take comfort whenever we find the friend and companion depicted in a ritual, an example being the friendship between Mithras and the sun-god. This relationship.... is the representation of a friendship between two men which is simply the outer reflection of an inner fact: it reveals our relationship to that inner friend of the soul into whom Nature herself would like to change us — that other person who we also are and yet can never attain to completely. We are that pair of Dioscuri, one of whom is mortal and the other immortal, and who, though always together, can never be made completely one. The transformation processes strive to approximate them to one another, but our consciousness is aware of resistances, because ... we cannot get accustomed to the idea that we are not absolute master in our own house. We should prefer to be always 'I' and nothing else....

You need not be insane to hear his voice. On the contrary, it is the simplest and most natural thing imaginable. For instance, you can ask yourself a question to which 'he' gives answer.... You can describe it as mere 'associating' ... or as a 'meditation' in the sense used by the old alchemists, who referred to their interlocutor as aliquem alium internum.... (CW, IX(i), 131)

The above sounds so much like a commentary on the Leo episode (and on Per Amica), that any further comment might seem unnecessary. Nevertheless, I shall bring to the reader's

attention certain points:

(1) The Leo-Yeats relationship is obviously analogous to the one between the pair of Dioscuri: like the archetypal 'friends' they are opposite to one another and yet they are 'complete' together.

(2) The transformation processes which strive to approximate the two are analogous to the process of approximation of man and mask, man and Daemon (or Ille and 'the mysterious one' in 'Ego Dominus Tuus' and Decima and her royal mask in The Player Queen).

(3) Before psychic transformation takes place, it is essential that the ego recognizes that it is not responsible for the contents of the unconscious and that it does not totally control them, for they are greater than it. In his postscript to Leo, Yeats is 'confident now as always that spiritual beings if they cannot write and speak can always listen' but he seriously doubts Leo's autonomous existence; for if Leo was not a ghost, as he suspected, granting him autonomy would mean the splitting of his psyche; it would threaten the mastery of 'I' and would devalue the ego. In terms Yeats would have never used, given his ignorance of Jung's work,¹⁸ Leo would seem to be an 'autonomous complex' — a psychic fragment that temporarily obsesses consciousness and behaves like an independent being, 'a fact especially evident in abnormal states of mind', i.e., the 'voices' heard by the insane (CW, VIII, 121). In this sense, Goldman's conclusion that Yeats 'feared for his soul'¹⁹ is justifiable. But if

Yeats did not grant Leo this autonomy, he granted it to the 'Daemon' in Per Amica. There the Daemon is not an artificial product of consciousness, a mere strategy; the mask now becomes more than a crude, however effective, behaviouristic trick. The Daemon exists in his own right, no matter if regarded as a symbol of psychic or supernatural realities. And in the poem 'Ego Dominus Tuus' the autonomy of 'the mysterious one' is celebrated. In Per Amica the ego is more than willing to make room for the contents of the unconscious, and the encounter with the Daemon involves a process of transformation, an enlargement of personality: 'I am in the place where the daemon is, but I do not think he is with me until I begin to make a new personality' (PA, 88).

(4) Revealingly, Leo invited Yeats to a dialogue similar to the one suggested above by Jung, thus underlying his existence as a transforming symbol: 'Leo may turn out to be a symbolic being.'

Regarded as a symbol then, Leo is certainly identifiable as the transforming symbol of the Friend and as such he can be compared to Hermes, the psychopompos, to a guru, or to the Holy Guardian Angel of the Qabalah — their symbolic function is similar, although the one is not identifiable as the other. The Holy Guardian Angel, for instance, stands for the Higher Self, and self-transformation (adept-hood) is gained through a contact between the Higher and the Lower Self.²⁰ Although Leo is not Yeats's Qabalistic Higher Self, his function is typical: he furthers the transition between Yeats's present state and his full

potential. The 'complete' Yeats is greater than Yeats as ego-personality. Leo, for instance, 'had been unscrupulous' while Yeats was 'over cautious and conscientious': 'The "other" may be just as one-sided in one way as the ego is in another. And yet the conflict between them may give rise to truth and meaning...' (CW, IX(1), 132). In the course of a dialogue between the Friend and the ego-consciousness, the Friend often directs his criticism against the latter. If I start a conversation with my Friend, he might tell me some very unpleasant things regarding my present state, and at the same time he can assure me that in my totality, as 'I' and 'He' (or 'Thou'), I am a complete, meaningful entity: 'Entangled in error, you are but a public man', 'Leo' wrote to Yeats. That the conflict between the ego-consciousness and the 'other' may give rise to truth and meaning Yeats expressed in a number of ways, as for example when, some three years before his first encounter with Leo, he wrote:

I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self; that all joyous or creative life is a re-birth as something not oneself, something which has no memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed.²¹ (My italics)

This 'something' is certainly greater than the ego-consciousness; it is a living integration of opposites.

To sum up: like the one of the Dioscuri who is immortal, Leo comes 'from the other side' of existence, as a 'ghost'. In this capacity he resembles the 'collective unconscious' which, as Jung and Wolfgang Pauli, the Nobel prizewinner in physics would have it,²² is not restricted

by the barriers of time and space, being analogous to the space-time continuum of nuclear physics. As the Friend so often is, Leo is 'greater' than Yeats — in the sense that the unconscious is 'greater' than the ego. Leo is experienced; his life has been full of adventures; he has what Yeats does not have — experience of 'the other side'. Leo is Yeats's great extension ('all things furthest from your intellect'). Like those 'images' in Per Amica, the images which come 'before the mind's eye' emerging from the Great Memory (Jung's collective unconscious) and show 'intention and choice', Leo 'had a relation to what one knew and yet [was] an extension of one's knowledge' (PA, 50). Having been with Yeats since childhood, Leo now comes to his rescue ('I have been sent to give you confidence & solitude') and invites Yeats to a creative contact with 'the other side' through their 'correspondence'.

Of course, the encounter with the 'other being', 'the other person in ourselves' (the Doppelgänger motif of German romanticism) is common in literature. Hermann Hesse's Demian (1916) is one of the many examples, literary or other, suggesting that the Leo-Yeats episode fits into a common pattern. Certainly, Leo and Yeats remind one of Max Demian and Emil Sinclair — a typical, though explicitly 'Jungian' pair of friends, created at about the time Yeats wrote Per Amica Silentia Lunae. Like the shy and 'over cautious' Yeats, Emil Sinclair is timid and insecure; yet after his encounter with the cool, self-possessed, over-confident Demian, his Mask and Friend, a process of

transformation starts taking place: Demian becomes the 'voice' within Sinclair, and eventually the two merge into a single, complete being, representing psychic totality. Like Leo, Demian comes to his friend's rescue. It is noteworthy that the approximation of the two is furthered 'by the help of an image' — Demian's picture which Sinclair describes as a 'sacred mask'. Demian is Sinclair's 'fate'; Yeats remembered Heraclitus: 'the Daemon is our destiny' (PA, 30).

Leo, as Friend, by claiming to be Yeats's 'antithesis' presents Yeats with the problem of psychic opposites, the solution to which (their synthesis) leads to the Self, the psychic totality which includes the ego, as well as everything that is opposite to it: 'The pairs of opposites constitute the phenomenology of the paradoxical self, man's totality' (CW, XIV, 6). Like the Sphere in A Vision, like ultimate reality, the Self 'falls in human consciousness ... into a series of antinomies' (V, 187). As the Self is a synthesis of psychic opposites, identification with it means freedom from them. But as absolute freedom from opposites cannot be achieved by a human being, the experience of completeness consists in imaginative identification of one's self with the Great Self, the archetypal Imago Dei (a process similar to the Taoist's identification with the eternal Tao²³). This is the meaning — or one of the meanings — of the notion that man is created 'in the image' of God, and that by knowing oneself one can know God. Indeed, this concept of correspondence makes 'Leo's'

claim that he is both 'the unconscious as you say' and 'Leo Africanus the traveller' meaningful, or at least less contradictory than it seems at first. The Platonic 'soul or the spirit ... is equally of man and of the cosmos'.²⁴ One's self is unique and unitemporal, 'the apotheosis of individuality'; yet 'the psychological self is a transcendent concept, expressing the totality of conscious and unconscious contents', and 'it can only be described in antinomial terms', as a synthesis of the unitemporal and the eternal, the unique and the universal (CW, IX(ii), 62-63). This psychological 'Self' is 'There', where 'all the barrel-hoops are knit' and 'all the planets drop in' the sphere of 'the Sun' (CP, 329). This synthesis of the unitemporal and the eternal is clearly expressed in Yeats's previously quoted words: '... a re-birth as something ... which ... is created in a moment and perpetually renewed' - a rebirth as the paradoxical Self.

Certainly, this Self reminds one of what Yeats's father called 'personality' and defined as 'the whole man, the great totality'. 'Personality', he wrote, 'transcends intellect and morality, and ... we love it for it is one with our very selves, and with the all pervasive Divine....'²⁵ Indeed, there came a time when, as Ellmann notes, Yeats 'began to see' that his father, with his 'exaltation of personality, his use of psychological terms, his belief in a totality of being in which intellect was only a part', was a collaborator rather than an opponent.²⁶ The theme of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' is the primal myth of the Quest for

this totality of being 'by the help of an image' — the transforming symbol of the Friend.

Strangely enough, commentators have not considered the symbolism of transformation in 'Ego Dominus Tuus'. Like John Unterecker,²⁷ most commentators deal with the poem in the context of Yeats's typology of primary and antithetical (Hic and Ille respectively). And when, like Virginia Moore in The Unicorn²⁸ and Kimon Friar in his M. A. dissertation,²⁹ they consider Jungian psychology, they are content to deal with the analogy between primary-antithetical and Jung's introverted-extroverted psychological types (with the exception of Thomas R. Whitaker who, in Swan and Shadow, does show an awareness of the relationship between 'the conscious self or ego' and the 'anti-self' or 'hidden ... self', though he misuses Jungian terminology³⁰). What is more, even James Olney, who may be rightfully regarded as the greatest authority on 'Yeats and Jung' and who, in his recent work on the subject, The Rhizome and the Flower,³¹ deals extensively with the concept of the daimon, does not refer to 'Ego Dominus Tuus', and mentions Leo Africanus ('Yeats's familiar and his own proper daimon') only once.³²

I do hope that the following reading of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' may suggest the psychological relevance of this poem in view of my discussion of the Leo-Yeats relationship and of the process of self-transformation.

As Goldman says, 'By "Ego Dominus Tuus" ... "Ille" is

calling for his own Leo Africanus, and ... he summons his "double", "opposite", and "anti-self", concepts which ... did not have to wait upon Mrs Yeats's mediumship.³³ Moreover, Ille is preparing to go 'beyond and outside of himself'³⁴ 'by the help of an image' — the archetypal image of the Friend. Ille is preparing for the enlargement of personality that will enable him to embrace values 'outside' himself (the ego-personality) — to allow the flow of 'new vital contents ... into the personality from outside'³⁵ — and thus become John Butler Yeats's 'personality', 'the great totality', and Jung's 'total personality' or 'Self'. But the regions 'outside' are vast and dark. Hic's initial statement presents us with two symbols which suggest Ille's descent into the dark regions, the unconscious depths:

HIC

On the grey sand beside the shallow stream
Under your old wind-beaten tower, where still
A lamp burns on beside the open book
That Michael Robartes left, you walk in the moon,
And, though you have passed the best of life, still trace,
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion,
Magical shapes. (CP, 180)

We should notice here that:

(1) Ille is walking 'in the moon', the moon being a major symbol for the unconscious. He is descending into 'the lunar world', 'the night world' (CW, XVIII, 180). And, as Yeats knew very well,³⁶ the moon is also a symbol of potential growth and fertility-birth, femininity. Luna, Μήνη, Σελάνα, Σελήνη, is feminine as the unconscious is feminine: it gives birth. Yet the descent, the separation from the world of daylight, creates at first a sense of desolation, suggested by the 'grey' sand (which towards

the end of the poem will become 'wet'), the apparently uninhabited tower, the abandoned book. The descent is as old as Homer's Odyssey and the Apocrypha³⁷ and as new as the moonlit world of Picasso's blue period, science fiction, and contemporary mythology of the Star Wars kind. Speaking of the Nekyia, the journey to Hades, Jung says that:

[It is] no aimless and purely destructive fall into the abyss, but a meaningful katabasis eis antron, a descent into the cave of initiation and secret knowledge.... The descent to the Mothers enabled Faust to raise up the sinfully whole human being — Paris united with Helen — that homo totus who was forgotten when contemporary man lost himself in one-sidedness.... This man stands opposed to the man of the present, because he is the one who ever is as he was, whereas the other is what he is only for the moment. With my patients ... the katabasis and katalysis are followed by a recognition of the bipolarity of human nature and of the necessity of conflicting pairs of opposites. (CW, XV, 139-40)

(2) Ille is 'beside the shallow stream'. Although at this point the stream is 'shallow' — the sand has not been wetted yet — water is primarily related to rebirth: the stream anticipates the final stage of Ille's quest. A stream or a river is a common symbol of the transcendental situation, of the intersection between time and timelessness, continuous flux and eternal pattern, like Shelley's 'moveless wave'.³⁸ It is in itself a symbol of the coniunctio oppositorum as well as an 'agent of transformation' — hence baptism, submersion, as alchemical symbols 'for the unconscious process by which the self is "reborn"' (CW, XIV, 382, 384).

ILLE

By the help of an image
I call to my own opposite, summon all
That I have handled least, least looked upon.

HIC

And I would find myself and not an image. (PA, 1-2)

Hic's 'self' is that part of his psyche which he can 'find' — the only psychic reality which, for him, is worth exploring, the thoughts and feelings which are definitely 'his'. Hic is interested in the ego's subjective knowledge of itself; he is like a dog chasing its own tail or a man who, 'trying to get rid of the left by turning constantly to the right', is compelled 'to go round in circles'.³⁹ As Ille wants to find his Self and not himself, he needs images, symbols — a mask — through which to invoke 'the other side'. The magician, the spiritualist, and the psychologist would have agreed on this point.

But, at the same time, Ille is defining an essential part of the poet's right attitude towards the unconscious, agreeing, at least in theory, with the surrealists who in the period between the two wars were discovering man's tendency not to be identified with his mind. When Hic says, 'I would find myself', Ille observes:

That is our modern hope, and by its light
We have lit upon the gentle, sensitive mind
And lost the old nonchalance of the hand;
Whether we have chosen chisel, pen or brush
We are but critics, or but half create,
Timid, entangled, empty and abashed.... (CP, 180)

What is missing from this artistic waste land of 'The Scholars' is 'the memory in the blood':⁴⁰ the Self is assimilated by the ego, 'criticism' being the most conscious, intellectual mode of approach to reality. Wordsworth, writes Yeats,

strikes me as always destroying his poetic experience,

which was ... of incomparable value, by his reflective power.... He thinks of his poetic experience not as incomparable in itself but as an engine that may be yoked to his intellect.⁴¹

Ille-Willie would have agreed with Jung:

Whenever the creative force predominates, life is ruled and shaped by the unconscious rather than by the conscious will, and the ego is swept along on an underground current, becoming nothing more than a helpless observer of events. The progress of the work becomes the poet's fate.... It is not Goethe that creates Faust, but Faust that creates Goethe.
(CW, XV, 103)

This is why Hic's 'sedentary toil / And ... the imitation of great masters' (CP, 182) are not enough. There is an obvious analogy between the paradox of becoming greater by wearing the mask of 'the other being' and the paradox of mastering one's art by subordinating oneself to it. ('I have been no more myself than is the cat the medicinal grass it is eating in the garden' (PA, 10).) Jung thought that the artist's disposition and experience suggested or involved 'an overweight of collective psychic life as against the personal',⁴² as 'Art is a kind of innate drive' and the artist

is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. As a human being he may have moods and a will and personal aims, but as an artist he is 'man' in a higher sense - he is 'collective man' - one who carries and shapes the unconscious, psychic life of mankind.⁴³

Similarly, Yeats's 'anti-self' or Daemon points towards archetypal, collective meaning and form: 'So always it is an impulse from some Daemon that gives to our vague, unsatisfied desire, beauty, a meaning and a form all can accept' (PA, 81). The writing of poetry itself points

towards the poet's rebirth as 'collective man'; great art is 'objective and impersonal, but none the less profoundly moves us each and all'.⁴⁴ Thus Dante, according to Ille, enlarged himself and achieved mastery because

I think he fashioned from his opposite
An image that might have been a stony face
Staring upon a Bedouin's horse-hair roof
From doored and windowed cliff.... (CP, 181)

The encounter with Leo is transferred to an artistic level, now giving birth to a model situation of poetic (in the place of psychic) growth. As Yeats suggests in 'The Poet and the Actress' (Appendix C: 1), 'it is the business of the intellect to call forth, to create the antagonist'. Dante could not have created 'beautiful things without the battle in the soul', without 'the struggle of a dream with the world'. This struggle 'is only possible when we transcend circumstances and ourselves, and the greater the contest, the greater the art'; 'the beauty he [Dante] created was his victory over himself'.

Of course, that the tension between the opposites is necessary and anticipates growth is a concept sanctioned by one of Yeats's great favourites, Heraclitus, as well as by Alchemy and the Qabalah. (I believe that these other sources do not undermine my claim for reference to Yeats's spiritualistic experience but instead enrich the psychological and poetic content of the Leo-Yeats 'affair'.) Heraclitus says that 'Even nature herself striveth after the opposite, bringing harmony not from like things, but from contrasts'.⁴⁵ The coniunctio oppositorum is a fundamental

concept in Alchemy; the alchemists insisted that, to experience life, one must not be a fragmentary personality: 'only a unified personality can in any true sense be called man'.⁴⁶ And in the Qabalah,

The Pair of Opposites, by themselves, are not functional because they are mutually neutralising; it is only when they unite in balanced force to flow forth as a Third, after the symbolism of Father, Mother, and Child, that they achieve dynamic activity....⁴⁷

In Jungian terms, the recognition of the necessity of opposites should result not only in embracing 'the whole of man's moral, bestial, and spiritual nature', but also in 'shaping it' into a Third, 'into a living unity' (CW, XV, 140).

In this connection, the reference to Dante's 'stony face' in 'Ego Dominus Tuus' is of particular interest. One of the most common symbols of the Self, of homo totus, is the stone either as rock or as precious stone (lapis lazuli, lapis philosophorum). Being something permanent, the stone symbolizes the indestructibility of the soul, the transcendental non-temporal character of the Self (hence tomb-stones, memorials, the 'rocky faces' carved in the cliff of Mt Rushmore, in South Dakota⁴⁸).

In Yeats's poetry the stone is sometimes explicitly used to denote peramanence, the element that remains 'When all is ruin once again' ('To be carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee' (CP, 214)). Yeats's 'Magi' have 'faces like rain-beaten stones' (CP, 141), and the three Chinamen in the celebrated poem

Are carved in lapis lazuli,

Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A Symbol of longevity.... (CP, 339)

Similarly, the 'storm-beaten old watch-tower' (CP, 270) is such a symbol of permanence. At the same time, it is a symbol of the psyche in its totality: rooted in earth, pointing towards heaven, it combines the male and female elements (tower and stair).⁴⁹ Like Yeats's Norman tower, Thoor Ballylee in Galway, it is a concrete, materialized symbol of the Self. Writing of his own tower at Bollingen, Jung sums up this man-tower-stone relationship:

From the beginning I felt the Tower as in some way a place of maturation — a maternal womb ... in which I could become what I was, what I am and will be. It gave me a feeling as if I were being reborn in stone.... During the building work ... I never considered these matters.... Only afterwards did I see ... that a meaningful form had resulted: a symbol of psychic wholeness.⁵⁰ (My italics)

I have suggested that, in 'Ego Dominus Tuus', Dante's 'stony face' is Yeats's poetic counterpart of the Third, Jung's 'living unity'. But the poem in which Yeats's identification with the stone is strongest and more direct is 'The Gyres'. Professor J. R. Mulryne has already established the vital relationship between the 'stony face' in 'Ego Dominus Tuus' and the 'Rocky Face'; he says that 'The Rocky Face of Last Poems is Yeats's symbolic discovery of an image that parallels the "stony face" of Dante' and speaks of 'transformation of the living to the condition of sculpted image'.⁵¹ Creative activity brings about this transformation as 'the writing of poetry ... liberates the poet from the world of cyclical nature; endowed with "creative power" he may "rejoice" in the

midst of tragedy. Finally, Mulryne continues, 'the poet is re-born as an invulnerable "stony face"' (p. 140). The condition of the sculpted image is here the quintessence of the poetic Self and, indeed, 'the poet achieves apotheosis as the sculpted image' (p. 143).

The vision of the poet-stone-Self (or collective man) is wider than the vision of this or that man, as the Self transcends the ego-personality and the intellect. The poet-stone-Self can even determine the pattern of history or can prophesy ('The Second Coming', 'I See Phantoms of Hatred...'). This kind of (theoretically infinite) knowledge is one of the two major characteristics of the archetypal image of the Divine.⁵² The poet is 'enlarged' and participates in Divine knowledge; his vision is the vision 'from above': 'I climb to the tower-top...' (CP, 231). Gods often look down from mountain tops (Olympus, Sinai) as do Yeats's hermits from 'Mount Meru or Everest': 'Egypt and Greece, good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!' (CP, 333). Civilizations, like life and death, do not matter for the antinomial Self: 'Cast a cold eye' (CP, 401). Whether or not Yeats's approach to Dante seems serious from the critical point of view, these are Dante's words, and they are relevant here: 'With my sight I turned back through all and every of the seven spheres, and saw this globe such that I smiled at its sorry semblance.'⁵³

To sum up: if tragedy is the result of conflicting opposites, by summoning his opposite the poet transcends tragedy and desolate reality and attains an objectivity

superior to that of 'all that we can touch or handle' (V, 71). The process of summoning 'the mysterious one' prepares the way for the poet's liberation from the enantiodromia (running between the opposites⁵⁴) of those who

Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write, still it is action:
The struggle of the fly in marmalade. (CP, 181)

The poet's self-transformation means his passing from the condition of the fly that struggles in marmalade to that of the 'long-legged fly upon the stream' (CP, 381).

When, in 'A General Introduction for my Work' (1937), Yeats discriminated between 'individual talent' and 'that ancient Self' of the Upanishads, and wrote that 'even when the poet seems most himself ... he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete' (E & I, 509), he emphasized the analogy between psychic transformation and poetic growth: '"A wise man seeks in Self," says the Chandogya Upanishad, "those that are alive and those that are dead and gets what the world cannot give"' (E & I, 509-10). In 'Ego Dominus Tuus', both man and poet seek in Self 'what the world cannot give': 'spherical' solutions like the one given by the Shvetashvatara Upanishad to the problem of the pair of opposites:

Behold, upon the selfsame tree,
Two birds, fast-bound companions, sit.
This one enjoys the ripened fruit,
The other looks, but does not eat.

On such a tree my spirit crouched...
Till seeing with joy how great its Lord,
It found from sorrow swift release....⁵⁵

But if the contact with 'the other side' is, eventually, creative, Ille's communion with his 'anti-self' is not expressed; unlike Leo, 'the mysterious one' does not appear, but Ille is certain that he

Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream...
 And, standing by these characters, disclose
 All that I seek; and whisper it as though
 He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
 Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
 Would carry it away to blasphemous men. (CP, 182-83)

In view of the fact that 'Ego Dominus Tuus' is usually regarded as a straightforward, didactic 'text for exposition', the poet's secretive mood in the last four lines comes as a surprise. With the direct reference, in these lines, to The Ritual of the Order of Rosae Rubae et Aureae Crucis,⁵⁶ Ille's communion with his 'anti-self' is presented as secret and sacred. The last four lines follow a direct, 'expositional' passage; 'the mysterious one' shall

look most like me, being indeed my double,
 And prove of all imaginable things
 The most unlike, being my anti-self.... (CP, 182)

'This is a touch too central', says Harold Bloom, 'too much the expositional and doctrinal text Yeats had been working to achieve.... The passage expounds itself, as though the poet had become his own academy, his future critics.'⁵⁷ One wonders at the sudden desire for secrecy which immediately follows it.

But the poem is less straightforward than it seems. No doubt, this is Yeats telling us about his latest insights in blank verse; however, this is not all. The last

four lines constitute Yeats's legitimate trick: in fact, the poet has already told us what can be 'said' about the 'anti-self' through symbols which surreptitiously pervade and enrich the expositional surface. Yeats's secretive mood in these lines parallels his emphasis on the necessity of secrecy regarding the breaking forth of 'the greater energies of the mind ... when the deeps are loosened' (G & E, 46), and shows his awareness of the fact that, as Itrat-Husain has noted, 'symbolism is a sign for something which could not be expressed in any other way'.⁵⁸ Like myth, the process of self-transformation is best expressed in symbols and images which cannot be translated into a discursive language.⁵⁹ As the Poet says in 'The Poet and the Actress', 'art ... is ... a battle but it takes place in the depths of the soul and one of the antagonists does not wear a shape known to the world or speak a mortal tongue'. Yeats's secretive manner in the concluding lines of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' suggests the limitations of 'texts for exposition' as well as our own, for we are surely Ille's 'blasphemous men'.

Still, it seems that Yeats himself discloses the ultimate secret of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' in 'The Poet and the Actress'. There he suggests that the encounter with the 'anti-self', 'the mysterious one', expresses 'the internal battle', the contest in the soul, that the "double" (Yeats's Mask and Friend) is Ille's creation.⁶⁰ After his endeavour to persuade the Actress to wear the mask he has brought 'from the city of Fez', the Poet confesses: 'There is no mask. I have never been in Fez.'

N O T E S

1. Translated by W. J. Strachan (London, 1958).
2. See P. W. Martin, Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Work of Jung, Eliot and Tynbee (London, 1976), p. 164. I am citing Martin, because he gives one of the shortest definitions of the term. For Jung's own definition see the 'Glossary' of his Memories, Dreams, Reflections, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (Glasgow, 1967), p. 414. For a comprehensive definition of the term see also my M. A. paper 'Vaughan's Treatment of the Process of Self-transformation in a Selection of his Religious Lyrics' (University of Warwick, 1978), p. 3, as well as Jolande Jacobi, Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung (London, 1959), p. 113.
3. In 'Criticism as Language' Barthes notes: 'Criticism is something other than making correct statements in the light of "true" principles.... How can anyone believe that a given work is an object independent of the psyche and personal history of the critic studying it, with regards to which he enjoys a sort of extraterritorial status?... criticism is not in any sense a table of results or a body of judgements.... The world exists and the writer uses language; such is the definition of literature. The object of criticism is very different; it deals not with "the world", but with the linguistic formulations made by others; it is a comment on a comment, a secondary language or meta-language (as the logicians would say), applied to a primary language (or language-as-object).... Consequently, if criticism is only a meta-language, its task is not to discover forms of "truth" but forms of "validity". In itself, a language cannot be true or false; it is either valid or non-valid. It is valid when it consists of a coherent system of signs.' The text, originally published in The Times Literary Supplement (1963), is reprinted in 20th Century Literary Criticism, edited by David Lodge (London, 1972), pp. 647-51. The above quotations are from Lodge's edition (pp. 648-49).
4. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 108-29 (pp. 120-21).
5. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 121.
6. The term is used to denote falling of chance groupings or series within the limits of probability. See Jung's Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle, translated by R. F. C. Hull (London, 1972), pp. 13-14.
7. Plays in Prose and Verse Written for an Irish Theatre and Generally with the Help of a Friend (London, 1922),

pp. 428-29. Quoted in Peter Ure, Yeats the Playwright (London, 1963), p. 134.

8. The volume and page reference is to C. G. Jung's Collected Works, translated by R. F. C. Hull and edited by Sir Herbert Read, Dr Michael Fordham, and Dr Gerhard Adler (London, 1953-78). Further volume and page references to Jung in this chapter are to this edition, cited as CW.

9. Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London, 1949, second edition 1961), p. 199.

10. C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, pp. 178-79.

11. See Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 178.

12. See chapter on Sigmund Freud in Memories, Dreams, Reflections, pp. 169-93.

13. 66, no. 2, 132-39 (p. 133). As Yeats wrote in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places', 'Sometimes ... the dead ... become the characters in the drama we ourselves have invented' (IIWFT, 50).

14. See Nandor Fodor, Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science (New York, 1966): 'Direct Voice'.

15. To suggest that the Leo-Yeats encounter is a psychologically 'meaningful coincidence', we can even consider the concept of synchronicity, on which Yeats collaborated with Wolfgang Pauli, the Nobel prizewinner in physics, in an effort to establish a relationship between the Jungian 'collective unconscious' and the space-time continuum of nuclear physics. By synchronicity Jung meant 'the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state' (CW, VIII: 441). In short, the term refers to 'a coincidence in time of two or more casually unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning' (CW, VIII, 441), to a 'meaningful' but acausal 'cross-connection' which 'exceeds the limits of probability' and statistical truth ('natural laws'), to a 'magical' causality (CW, VIII, 427). Jung mentioned a number of 'meaningful coincidences' which appear to justify the hypothesis that, although 'Chance groupings or series seem ... to fall as a general rule within the limits of probability' ('chancefulness'), there are also incidents whose 'chancefulness' or 'seriality' seem 'open to doubt' (CW, VIII, 425-26). According to the principle of synchronicity, incidents such as Yeats's confrontation with his 'mask' can be 'explained' after the theoretically unlimited domain of the psyche and the space-time continuum of nuclear physics are seen as the inner and outer aspects of 'one and the same reality behind appearances' - at least if conscious and unconscious fraud or mere chance are ruled out.

16. See 'The Process of Individuation' in Man and his Symbols, conceived and edited by C. G. Jung (London, 1964, second edition 1978), p. 227.

17. 'The common denominator is a symbolically expressed message'. (Man and his Symbols, p. 227.)

18. And, we should add, his dislike of 'scientific' terminology. As regards Yeats's knowledge — or 'almost complete ignorance' — of Jung's work, I am quoting from James Olney's The Rhizome and the Flower: The Perennial Philosophy — Yeats and Jung (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1980), pp. 5-6: 'The journalist H. W. Nevins reports that when he called on Yeats in October 1916, "he talked of Freud and Jung and the Subconscious Self, applying the doctrine to art." I think, however, that Jung would have failed to recognize any of his own distinctive ideas in what Nevins goes on to report on Yeats's conversation, so that this unique recorded instance of Jung's name on Yeats's lips must be treated as a simple dead end. In Virginia Moore's The Unicorn we are offered another tantalizing tidbit when we are told (p. 300) that "Yeats's unpublished journal contains Jung's name and address" — but George Mills Harper disposes of this item with the information (privately communicated) that, while Jung's name and address are indeed there, they are written in an unknown hand, certainly not Yeats's.' (The name of 'Carl G. Jung' appears among Yeats's unpublished records of seances. Jung's name, written in a hand other than Yeats's, comes after the record of a seance held on June 28, 1913, and described in Chapter 1, and on the top of a page containing astrological symbols and notes in Yeats's hand. I am not certain, however, that Jung's name is followed by his address. I cannot make out most of the words written in this other hand, but it seems that the name is followed by a German title. On top of the reference to Jung, the name of Sigmund Freud also appears.) Olney goes on, noting that, 'In Wheels and Butterflies, Yeats remarks, very much in passing, that "a German psycho-analyst has traced 'the mother complex' back to our mother the sea".' Even if, 'Jung was neither German nor (by 1934) a "psycho-analyst"', Olney is certain that Yeats had Jung in his mind, and is 'equally confident' that Yeats 'only half understood what he was talking about', as well as that 'Yeats's information came from what someone told him rather than from a reading of Jung'. To substantiate the latter view, Olney observes (p. 6, note 6) that in Yeats's library there is only one volume of Jung, Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology (London, 1916) and rightly observes that 'the essays in that volume can hardly be taken as very revealing about Jung's mature ideas'. In the same note, the suggestion of Virginia Moore and T. R. Henn that 'certain elements in Yeats show a remarkable consonance with the ideas

expressed by Jung in his commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower', is rejected on the grounds that 'from Yeats's Letters (pp. 786 and 788), it would appear that he borrowed Olivia Shakespeare's copy of the book, though whether he actually read it remains very uncertain; in any case, Jung's commentary could hardly have been formative as far as Yeats's ideas or his poetry are concerned, for he encountered the book only in 1931/32'.

19. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in Yeats and the Occult, p. 120.

20. See Dion Fortune, The Mystical Qabalah (London, 1935), p. 291: 'When the Higher Self and the Lower Self become united ... true adepthood is gained....'

21. Quoted in Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 177.

22. See note 15 above and Aniela Jaffé, 'Symbolism in the Visual Arts' in Man and his Symbols, pp. 255-322 (p. 303): 'The parallelism between nuclear physics and the psychology of the collective unconscious was often a subject of discussion between Jung and Wolfgang Pauli.... The space-time continuum of physics and the collective unconscious can be seen ... as the outer and inner aspects of one and the same reality behind appearances.'

23. In Chinese Philosophy, Tao is 'the Absolute - both the path and the goal. It denotes also the cosmic order ... signifying that which is above the realm of corporeality'. (Dictionary of Mysticism, edited by Frank Gaynor (London, 1974), p. 181.

24. See James Olney, 'The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung' in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 27-54 (p. 34).

25. Quoted in Ellmann, p. 20.

26. Yeats: The Man and the Masks, pp. 210-11.

27. See A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats (London, 1975), p. 147.

28. (New York, 1954), p. 293.

29. 'A Vision by W. B. Yeats' (University of Michigan). Extracts were published in The Expansional Review, Wilmington College, Wilmington, Ohio (May 1953), and in Greek Heritage, 1, no. 3 (1964), Chicago-Athens. The (abridged dissertation was recently published in Greece in Friar's collection of essays titled The Stony Eyes of the Medusa [Τὰ Πέτρινα Μάτια τῆς Μέδουσας] (Athens, 1981), pp. 121-82.

30. Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History (Chapel Hill, 1964), p. 6: '... the invoked anti-self [in 'Ego Dominus Tuus'] is, even in its very unlikeness to the conscious self or ego, a reflection of a hidden or at least potential self. One's double or shadow, though it is not merely a projection, constellates in projected form all that remains in darkness within the self, all that is denied or repressed by the ego.' Although Whitaker's observations on the similarities in thought between Yeats and Jung are very useful, and although his knowledge of the subject is impressive, his use of the term shadow is confusing in the context of 'Ego Dominus Tuus'. The shadow is an autonomous complex, a 'psychic fragment' or 'split off' which personifies what the ego-consciousness refuses to acknowledge about itself ('all / That I have handled least, least looked upon'). Yet, it should not be identified with the archetype of the Friend, the daimon, who is 'a hidden manifestation of God' or of one's 'deeper self', as Whitaker seems to suggest (p. 7). The shadow may be identifiable with the Friend only after the ego-consciousness recognizes its significance during the process of self-transformation. This is not made clear by Whitaker.

31. The Rhizome and the Flower: The Perennial Philosophy - Yeats and Jung, cited in note 18 above.

32. See The Rhizome and the Flower, p. 241.

33. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in Yeats and the Occult, p. 126.

34. Goldman, p. 126.

35. See Jung's 'Concerning Rebirth', esp. pp. 120-22 (CW, IX(1)).

36. See Yeats reference to the moon in 'Emotion of Multitude' (G & E, 341).

37. Consider Odysseus' descent to Hades in Homer and Christ's descent to Hades in Nicodemus.

38. From The Revolt of Islam:

One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are.

Quoted in Harold Bloom's Yeats (New York, 1970), p. 201, in connection with 'Ego Dominus Tuus'.

39. See Allan W. Watts, The Way of Zen (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1962), pp. 135-36.

40. See Jung's reference to the awakening of 'the memories in the blood' in 'Picasso' (CW, XV, 140).

41. Letter to J. B. Yeats, quoted in Bloom, p. 200.

42. 'Psychology and Literature', Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and C. F. Baynes (London, 1961), p. 195.

43. 'Psychology and Literature', p. 195.

44. 'Psychology and Literature', p. 199.

45. Quoted in P. W. Martin, Experiment in Depth, p. 142.

46. See Virginia Moore, The Unicorn, p. 297.

47. Fortune, The Mystical Qabalah, p. 244.

48. See M. -L von Franz's discussion of the symbolism of the stone in 'The Process of Individuation' in Man and his Symbols, pp. 157-254 (pp. 221-26).

49. In this connection see John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats, p. 208.

50. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 252.

51. 'The Last Poems' in Yeats: Last Poems, edited by Jon Stallworthy (London, 1968), pp. 138-159 (p. 140). Further references to this essay are given after quotations in the text.

52. See Maud Bodkin's 'Images and Experience of God' in her Studies of Type-Images in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy (London and New York, 1951), p. 19.

53. Quoted in Bodkin, p. 19.

54. See also Martin, Experiment in Depth, p. 139.

55. Quoted in Jung (CW, IX(i), 121-22) as a typical reference to the 'pair of friends' situation.

56. See Fernando Picchi, Esoterismo e Magia nelle Poesie di W. B. Yeats (Firenze, 1977), p. 178.

57. Yeats, p. 197.

58. See Itrat-Husain, The Mystical Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century (Edinburgh and London, 1948), p. 214.

59. See Jolande Jacobi, Complex, Archetype, Symbol, in

the Psychology of C. G. Jung (London, 1959), p. 118:
'it has not been possible ... to translate this [myth]
into abstract concepts, into a discursive language. The
only appropriate expression for it remains the image,
the symbol. Thus every man and every period give the
symbols a new guise, and the "eternal truth" that the
symbol communicates speaks to us in undying splendor.'

60. See also Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks,
p. 202.

CHAPTER 7

SPIRITUALISTIC SCENARIOS IN MICHAEL ROBARTES AND THE DANCER

There are reasons to believe that some poems in Michael Robartes and the Dancer (1921) are directly connected with Yeats's spiritualistic experience; that phenomena and 'central situations' particular to mediumship, spiritualism, and psychical research, such as invocation of spirits, trance-speaking, and apparitions, sometimes are Yeats's 'raw materials' in this volume.

'An Image from a Past Life', set in dialogue between 'He' (a lover) and 'She' (his beloved), seems to owe something to mediumship and spiritualism as regards its subject and manner. Yeats writes that this poem is based on the idea that man's life is haunted by 'the forms of those whom he has loved in some past earthly life, chosen from Spiritus Mundi by the subconscious will'.¹ And, as Professor Goldman notes, 'the new beloved fears the persistence of an old flame in her lover's psyche as a kind of spirit-control's return to a medium or sitter'.²

Indeed, the dramatis personae in this poem resemble those of a seance-room — 'a lover, 'his beloved', a 'sweet-

heart from another life', corresponding to 'a sitter', 'a medium', 'a control'. In the fourth stanza the 'medium' is relating her vision to the 'sitter':

She. A sweetheart from another life floats there
 As though she had been forced to linger
 From vague distress
 Or arrogant loveliness,
 Merely to loosen out a tress
 Among the starry eddies of her hair
 Upon the paleness of a finger. (CP, 201)

Like a sceptical sitter, the lover is trying to persuade his beloved that she is only 'imagining' things:

He. What is there but the slowly fading west,
 The river imaging the flashing skies,
 All that to this moment charmed you?...

But why should you grow suddenly afraid
 And start — I at your shoulder —
 Imagining
 That any night could bring
 An image up ...? (CP, 201)

Yet, the vision of the dead sweetheart is now assuming the character of a menacing 'materialization', a 'Ligeia',³ as it grows in intensity and becomes a 'hovering thing':

She. Now she has thrown her arms above her head;
 Whether she threw them up to flout me,
 Or but to find,
 Now that no fingers bind,
 That her hair streams upon the wind,
 I do not know, that know I am afraid
 Of the hovering thing night brought me. (CP, 201)

The immediacy of this poem seems to depend greatly upon Yeats's subtle use of mediumistic revelation. Vision seen 'in the mind's eye' is directly put into words; thus, it is not any more an 'image' or a sequence of images but it assumes an aural-oral (and oracular) character: it becomes an 'utterance', a 'cry' meant to be heard by both 'sitter' and reader at the moment at which it is conceived.

Moreover, the dialogue form gives the poem the immediacy of 'stenographic records of seances',⁴ such as the ones which appear in Appendix A.

There is some evidence that the plot of 'The Second Coming' is also connected with Yeats the seance-goer. Of course, this major poem cannot be fully 'interpreted' with reference to Yeats's spiritualistic interests, without considering its place in his dogmatic prose writings on the pattern of history. However, the following discussion might shed some light on his poetic tactics, his choice of 'voice' and manner, themes and images.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? (CP, 210-11)

Professor Goldman was the first to suggest that:

the narrator's voice comes to resemble the voice of a control in a trance-vision. The first stanza of the poem, or at the least the lines announcing 'The Second Coming' are called 'words out', i.e., words spoken, and the voice speaking them is superseded by another which announces 'a vast

image out of Spiritus Mundi': a control (or communicator) is speaking, and now telling us what he sees. As the 'message' nears the end, 'The darkness drops again', less the end of the desert day than of the control's vision.⁵

Indeed, if we are to imagine an ideal 'setting' for this poem, it cannot be other than that of the seance-room. One would tend to agree with Goldman's challenging view, but at the same time one would demand concrete evidence. My research into Yeats's spiritualistic papers has convinced me that some evidence of this kind does exist, and that its consideration may help us understand Yeats's poetic tactics in this major work.

First and foremost, this evidence refers to the central image of the 'rough beast': '... a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi... / A shape with lion body and the head of a man...'. Yeats's vagueness of description and imprecision of imagery have baffled critics, who have been trying for years to trace concrete visual stimuli that may have suggested the 'rough beast'. The Egyptian sphinx is a first possibility, but we cannot be certain.⁶ Blake's illustration to Dante's Divine Comedy, 'representing a winged lion with an eagle's head drawing Beatrice's chariot', is regarded by T. R. Henn as another possible source.⁷ But, apart from the fact that Yeats's beast has 'the head of a man', the Therion of Beatrice Addressing Dante from the Car seems too harmless, placid and obedient to have suggested the rough beast. Then we have Peter Ure's view that the beast can be traced back to 'a black Titan raising himself up by his two hands from the middle of a heap of ancient ruins' (A, 186) in a desert,

during the experiments with Mathers in 1887.⁸ Unfortunately, Ure misses the point that Titans are anthropomorphic, not theriomorphic representations. Finally, we have Giorgio Melchiori's reference to Blake's representation of an old man, Nebuchadnezzar.⁹ But, as I have suggested elsewhere,¹⁰ there is something ludicrous about Blake's beast-man who seems terrified rather than terrifying, as his face looks utterly surprised at the form of his own body.

It seems that Yeats's vagueness of description and imagistic imprecision is deliberate. The beast is as vague as it is 'vast'; it is a 'shape' never actually described. The description of its gaze as 'blank and pitiless as the sun' refers to what the beast is, rather than to what it looks like, in the same way that the verb 'slouches' refers to the kind of energy it possesses. Indeed, Ellmann is right when he observes that 'the indeterminate label' ('shape') is intended 'to increase [the] portentousness' of the image.¹¹

Considering then that here Yeats's vagueness of description is deliberate, it is noteworthy that the 'vast' and abstract image of the 'shape' corresponds to his comments on mediumistic imagery in the 'Seance with Mrs Harris' (Appendix A:9), held in July 1915, some three and a half years before the composition of the poem:

I was reminded of the figures that one used to make on a sheet when I was a child by standing between the candle and a sheet. Only now, I was the audience and could not tell what made the figures so vast and so shapeless (my italics).

Moreover, it is interesting to note that in Jon Stallworthy's

transcript of the first full draft of the poem 'the dark was cut as with a knife' just before the appearance of 'a ~~stark~~ image out of spiritus mundi'.¹² This suggests a sudden vision, in the same way that 'the darkness' which 'drops again' in the final version corresponds, as Goldman believes, less to the end of the desert day than to the vision of a control or communicator.

Of course, the above evidence is not meant as proof. It suggests however that Yeats's choice was influenced to a degree by the portentousness of 'abstract' mediumistic imagery, that after the 'entrance' of the 'vast image' a control or communicator is speaking, telling us what he sees. (Records of experimental sittings show that mediumistic imagery is 'abstract'.¹³)

More evidence regarding the connection between 'The Second Coming' and Yeats's spiritualistic interests appears to exist in the envelope marked 'Note-book of Stainton Moses (1873)' (Appendix D), containing a typescript of more than two hundred pages, which is found among the poet's 'occult' papers. I should remind the reader that the Rev. William Stainton Moses claimed that he was controlled by a group of spirits, the so-called 'Imperator Band', whose 'mission' was to warn man of an impending crisis and world catastrophe: a 'bitter struggle' was 'at hand', and it would accompany the crisis of modern civilization. After the death of Moses in 1892, the 'Imperator Band' was alleged to have visited other mediums, including the famous Mrs Piper during the last stage of her trances, 1897-1905.¹⁴ Of course, Yeats

was well informed on the case of Mrs. Piper.

Before discussing the probable connection between the Moses script and 'The Second Coming', I should explain that the 'Imperator Band' was an offspring of the end-of-an-era speculation, 'the "voices prophesying war" of decadent apocalypticism' in the late 19th century. The warnings of this 'Band' 'blended with other "prophecies" ... of world catastrophe'.¹⁵ Surely, it was not only Lord Henry and Dorian Gray who spoke of 'fin de siècle' and 'fin du globe'. The Second Coming was always 'at hand' in religious, occult, spiritualistic and other circles that delighted in apocalypticism. We remember Max Nordau's 'feeling ... of imminent perdition and extinction',¹⁶ and the 'Plagues, troubles, blood ... dreadful confusions and upheavals' foreseen by Mère du Bourg.¹⁷ We also remember the cataclysmic visions of Eugene Vintras,¹⁸ Mathers' 'prevision' of 'the imminence of immense wars' (A, 336), or the popular new fiction of 'imaginary warfare', established throughout Europe after the publication of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's successful Battle of Dorking in the widely read Blackwood's Magazine, in 1871.¹⁹ As a collector of prophecies and a partisan of the 'magical armageddon', the war that 'would fulfil the prophets',²⁰ Yeats partook of this Millenarian milieu, the fin de siècle mood which he described in an epigrammatic manner as 'the last surrender, the irrational cry, revelation - the scream of Juno's peacock' (V, 268).

The 'dire vision' and the 'cataclysmic terribleness' of 'The Second Coming' appear to owe something to the

prophecies of the 'Imperator Band'.²¹ In the Moses script we read, for example, that there

comes the struggle: prolonged, and becoming more bitter as the crisis draws near....

... And now a great convulsion is taking place among the evil powers and the crisis of the struggle is at hand.

And when, in another instance, Moses asks his controls if 'all this spiritual disturbance [is] indicative of a special struggle', the answer he gets brings to mind Yeats's comments on 'The Second Coming' regarding the alternation of eras and the notion of the gyres:²² 'Yea, verily', say Moses's controls,

it is the first muttering of a conflict dire and dread[ful?] between good and evil, between the powers of light and of darkness. It has ever been so at certain seasons. It is so now specially. If ye could read the story of your world with spirit-sight ye could see that there have been ever periodic battles between the opposing forces. There have come seasons when the low and undeveloped spirits predominate. Especially are such seasons those succeeding great wars among you. (Appendix D)

The 'message' of the voice which, according to Goldman, supersedes that of the narrator in 'The Second Coming' and announces the 'entrance' of the 'vast image' appears to be such a reading of 'the story of your world with spirit-sight', though its sibylline expression and imagery have little to do with the unhistorical good-and-evil or light-and-darkness world of Moses's controls.

The view that 'The Second Coming' is a 'seance-poem' for two voices, the voice of a narrator (or medium) and the voice of a control (or communicator) who sends out a symbolical, sibylline message, has an intrinsic dramatic value, and may prove suggestive to actors, students, and scholars

reciting it. But, what is more, it may prove helpful in answering the strange use of rhyme in this poem. --

As Jon Stallworthy has noted, the drafts of 'The Second Coming' show that the poem was originally planned to be written in rhyme.²³ (Consider 'wide' and 'died' on F. Ir, as well as 'day' / 'pay', 'falconer' / 'murderer' on F. 2r and 'clock' / 'dock' on F. Iv.²⁴) In the final version, however, we have only two (approximate) rhymes in the first four lines: 'gyre' / 'falconer' (weak-and-consonance rhyme) and 'hold' / 'world' (consonance-rhyme). As Marjorie Perloff has observed, both rhymes involve semantic relationships:

The first rhyme is antithesis-rhyme: the 'widening gyre' ... is opposed to the 'falconer' The rhyme thus contains a tension between chaos and order, emphasized by the minimal approximation of the rhyme: the heavily stressed rhyming unit ... of 'gyre' is barely echoed by the weakly stressed rhyming unit ... of 'falconer'. The second rhyme is irony-rhyme: as 'Things fall apart', it is not only the 'centre' but the 'world' itself that cannot 'hold'.²⁵

Perloff adds that what happens in the fifth line of the final version of the poem is 'particularly interesting': 'As "Things fall apart" in the nightmare vision of the speaker, so does the rhyme scheme of the poem: rhymed couplets give way to blank verse.' To explain this, Perloff refers to Stallworthy's view that Yeats abandons rhyme at this point because 'it ... might distract and limit the reader's attention',²⁶ and makes her own proposal: 'it seems more likely that Yeats felt that rhyme would be unsuitable for a poem of such unmitigated violence and bitterness'.²⁷ Both views are reasonable. Still, taking into consideration Goldman's suggestion, one can suppose that

here Yeats is creatively imitating the ways of mediums: as his narrator is losing possession of will, the poet is gradually and artfully 'losing control' over his own material.

Interestingly, this view is supported by the little noticed fact that after rhymed couplets give way to blank verse and the rhyme scheme 'falls apart', the simple grammatical structure of the poem is interrupted by the syntactic confusion of the last four lines. After 'The darkness drops again', the speaker knows

That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? (CP, 211)

The simple question 'What is the man saying?' is not inappropriate here:²⁸ Yeats's narrator claims to know something whose expression in the last two lines turns out to be a question, in the same way that the final sentence turns out to be a grammatically strange or 'impossible hybrid' that begins with an assertion and ends with a question.²⁹

Indeed, James Olney is right to ask whether Yeats conceived 'a complex sentence with two direct-object clauses and a nonparallel structure ("I know that ... and what ...")' or 'a complex-compound sentence (with "I" and "beast" as the subjects of the two independent clauses)'.³⁰ It is hard to say whether Yeats meant this confusion; it is noteworthy, however, that his 'loss of (grammatical) control' towards the end of the poem reminds one of the peculiar character of mediumistic utterance, of the delight of most mediums 'in the use of unusual combinations of word-sounds and patterns' a fact that has been the reason for calling them 'frustrated

linguists'.³¹ It seems that if the early Yeats 'delighted in constructing puzzles',³² the Yeats of 'The Second Coming' imitated the ways of Apollo Loxias, 'the ambiguous one', providing us with what Roland Barthes calls 'suspended meaning'.³³

The question that arises at this point concerns the reasons for which Yeats should employ the language of trance-speaking. If the above views are accepted, it would appear that Yeats resorted to the ambiguity of mediumistic utterance because he thought it would heighten the portentousness of his message, in the same way that his use of 'abstract' mediumistic imagery heightens the portentousness of the 'vast image'. But one can think of another, less obvious, reason, suggested by Richard Ellmann's view that 'The Second Coming' should not be regarded as a poem hailing the 'new dispensation' (the 'new cycle' to which I referred in Chapter 4), for

The two editions of A Vision paint a pleasanter picture of the new god than might be expected, and are not wholly consistent with the poem. According to A Vision, the new god will usher in a subjective era in which, as during the Renaissance, personality will be fully expressed instead of downtrodden as now But ... 'The Second Coming' gives no hint of the redeeming or even salutary qualities of the new dispensation.³⁴

In this sense, one could suppose that the narrator, whose voice is superseded by the voice of a control or communicator, is not to be held responsible for the 'entrance' of the 'vast image', the 'rough beast': his ego-personality or ego-consciousness is suddenly controlled by images 'out of Spiritus Mundi', in the same way that the medium's mind is raped 'from above' and extinguished. Like a medium, Yeats

is not willing to be identified with the speaker of his oracle. The modus operandi of trance-mediumship provides the poet with a mechanism that allows him to present a prophecy whose fulfilment is neither welcomed nor rejected by the poem, an oracular riddle for which he is as responsible as a modern sibyl or Cassandra who foresees 'Plagues, troubles, blood', fire and cataclysm.

In the above context, Goldman's views on the relationship between 'The Second Coming' and trance-mediumship may result in a better understanding of the psychological and imagistic dimensions of the poem. Indeed, the term 'mediumship' can be understood on various levels. For a convinced spiritualist, it is the process of 'communication between the material and spirit world'.³⁵ For a Jungian psychologist, it is a way of communicating with 'the deep', with 'shadowy personifications of unconscious contents'.³⁶ For a poet like Yeats, it is a metaphor for his art as well as a metaphor in his art. All three cases are linked together by analogy. The unconscious may be paralleled to a medium who has the power of revealing age-old truths, as it 'corresponds to the mythic land of the dead, the land of the ancestors'.³⁷ Like a 'medium', the unconscious perception is not impeded by the space-time barrier, for, as Jung suggests, it can obtain experiences to which the conscious mind has no access³⁸ — it can fish out collective form and meaning from the universal store-house of images, Yeats's Spiritus Mundi. Moreover, as some writers on aesthetics suggest, and as Yeats knew very well, the poet's function is analogous to that of the seer: the poet sits 'on the

tripod of the Muse' (ἐν τῷ τρίποδι τῆς Μούσης). These writers remind us that George Eliot spoke of a strange power which guided her thoughts and feelings, and that Nietzsche spoke of a revelation, a sudden 'presence' which 'possesses' the creative mind.³⁹ And Melchiori notes that for the poet (as well as for the medium), the experience of revelation is 'of such intensity that the poet feels it as a mental and psychical rape', 'a rape from above'.⁴⁰ One may also speak of an 'invasion' or 'eruption' of symbolic images and themes which possess the mind.

In Jungian terms, the age-old truth revealed by the poet-medium in the first two lines ('Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer') is the following.

The spiral movement of the falcon corresponds to the archetypal symbol of the mandala (the Sanskrit name for the geometrical pattern whose essential features are the circle, the square, four radii quartering the figure, and, of course, a centre, which is of especial importance⁴¹). This is the symbol that we often meet in Yeats's writings as 'gyre', 'winding stair', uroboros, the serpent that bites its tail ('There all the serpent-tails are bit'), or as 'Great Wheel'.⁴² The symbol of the mandala is derived from the age-old magical 'protective cycle', and its function is described by Jung:

It has the obvious purpose of drawing a sulcus primigenius, a magical furrow around the centre, the temple or temenos ... of the innermost personality, in order to prevent an 'outflowing' or to guard ... against distracting influences from outside.⁴³

The movement of the soul's progress, individual or collective,

is spiral and starts from the circumference, i.e. the flight of the falcon, moving towards the centre, the archetype of 'psychic wholeness' that in Chapter 6 was called 'Self', i.e. the falconer. (In this sense, the debate on whether the falconer is Christ seems hardly justifiable.⁴⁴) Yet the bird follows the opposite direction: 'turning in the widening gyre', it 'cannot hear the falconer' — 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world'. If, in Jung, the movement away from the 'centre' corresponds to psychic chaos, the 'widening gyre' corresponds, in Yeats, to the 'chaos and violence that mark the cataclysmic point where the countermovement or opposite cycle will begin'.⁴⁵

Just before the beginning of the opposite cycle, the narrator or poet-medium 'sees' a 'blood-dimmed tide' analogous to the 'Plagues, troubles, blood' of *Mère du Bourg* or to Jung's vision of 'a monstrous flood' which anticipated the First World War.⁴⁶ Then, after the incantatory repetition⁴⁷ of 'Surely', 'at hand', and 'the Second Coming' (all three are repeated three times in the first three lines of the second stanza), we have the entrance of the 'vast image'. This vision of the poet-medium comes 'out of Spiritus Mundi' and brings with it a second archetypal theme, that of the Divine Birth or incarnation. Maud Bodkin⁴⁸ had discussed Yeats's poem in relation to this archetypal theme in a very competent manner and I do not wish to go over the same ground again. Here it may suffice to note that we find this theme not only in the image of the Cradle of Bethlehem (the 'rocking cradle' of the poem), but also in the ritual patterns of the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, Canaan, Greece.⁴⁹

Yet, there is a shocking contrast between the birth of the 'rough beast' and the birth that is considered the entry of the divine into our world. The birth of the beast is numinous, to use the term given currency by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy 'to characterize that which arouses awe, transcending, whether for good or ill, forces intelligible to our intellect';⁵⁰ it represents a devastating, transcendent and menacing form of the unknown, breaking into our life and order.⁵¹ It appears that this 'irreverent' contrast annoyed some Christian circles, which perhaps would not have been alarmed had the poem been titled 'A Second Coming', as Professor Mulryne^{has} suggested to me, or 'The Second Birth' which appears in the first full draft.⁵²

Yeats's 'irreverent' variation on the archetypal theme of the Divine Birth also annoyed some critical — not necessarily Christian — circles who observed that 'nothing in the poem justifies the ... merely misleading outcry that the Second Coming, with all of its traditional reverberations, is upon us', that the poem is characterized by 'much arbitrariness and incoherence', as Christianity is 'largely irrelevant to the poem', being 'dragged into its vortex by Yeats's title'.⁵³ But if we regard the poem as a 'spiritualistic scenario', such critical objections appear to lose some of their interest, and the announcement of 'the Second Coming' does not seem arbitrary. According to this scenario, the narrator-medium hardly announces 'the Second Coming' ('hardly are these words out'), when his 'sight' is troubled by the 'vast image' and his voice is superseded by the voice of a control. The Second Coming is expected by the speaker

as much as it is expected by the reader. We should not forget that before or after the poem was composed, spiritualists, occultists, and Second Adventists were thrilled at the prospect of 'the good news', the New Dispensation, and that, in 1925, Annie Besant presented the world with the new Messiah who was no other than Krishnamurti,⁵⁴ Yeats was in touch with these currents of 'the occult underground'. But, like a medium, the speaker is suddenly 'raped from above'; instead of an announcement of 'the good news', there follows the description of a nightmare vision. What happens at this point is comparable to the tuning in, 'accidentally', to a foreign radio station. This is a major metaphor for mediumship which, as it seems, Yeats used in this poem, as when he designed the entrances of 'Lulu', 'Swift', and 'Vanessa' in The Words upon the Window-pane, considering the effectiveness of 'some violent shock' (W & B, 109).

Yeats's 'imitation' of trance-mediumship and his 'irreverent' variation on the archetypal motif of the Divine Birth point towards a more comprehensive approach to the psychological, and even political, content of the poem. To understand this content, we should first consider Jung's observations on the psychological aspects of the rise of Nazism and on the return or rebirth of Wotan, the German god of war. I will give a short summary of these observations, which were published in 1918, 1936, and 1946.⁵⁵

Already in 1918, Jung had noticed some strange disturbances in the unconscious of his German patients, which could not be explained on the basis of personal psychology.

As these non-personal phenomena were always expressed in dreams as mythological motifs, Jung called them 'archetypes', that is typical modi in which such collective phenomena find expression. The archetypes he diagnosed in his patients suggested an eruption of primitive elements such as violence and cruelty. After dealing with a considerable number of similar cases, he concluded that a 'strange' mental climate (depression, anxiety) was prevalent in Germany, and in a study he published at that time he hinted that as the 'blond beast' had started stirring in its sleep, its waking might be expected.⁵⁶

This mental climate, he thought, was not an exclusively Teutonic phenomenon, although the German psyche proved more vulnerable. The tide that was loosed in the collective unconscious after the first World War had the unmitigated, devastating force of 'all the dark powers', 'the demons of totalitarianism',⁵⁷ which eventually found an outlet in Hitler's 'new order'. Already in 1918, Jung was asking:

Where are today's superior intellects, those capable of thought? If they exist, nobody pays them any attention. Instead, a general frenzy is prevalent, a universal and fatal force, against whose overwhelming influence the individual cannot react.⁵⁸

Jung spoke of an epidemic of madness, and in his essay on 'Wotan', first published in March 1936, he noted that this 'ancient god of storm and madness' who releases passions and the thirst for war had been waken^{ed} after a long period of sleep.⁵⁹ Wotan was reborn in the youth movement (Jugendbewegung), and in the sacrifices which celebrated his rebirth much blood was spilt.⁶⁰ This phenomenon of mass hysteria was comparable to a 'possession' by infernal spirits,

Wotan being the 'irrational psychic factor' that overwhelms civilization.⁶¹

The analogies between Jung's observations and 'The Second Coming' are obvious. At about the time (1918) when Jung diagnoses an eruption of primitive archetypal elements, violence and cruelty, Yeats's narrator-medium speaks of 'Mere anarchy' that 'is loosed upon the world'. When Jung refers to the tide that was loosed in the collective unconscious, the narrator speaks of 'The blood-dimmed tide'. When Jung asks 'Where are today's superior intellects ... ?' the narrator observes that 'The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.' And when Jung hints at the appearance of the 'blond beast' and diagnoses Wotan's return after a long period of deep sleep, Yeats's narrator-medium is 'possessed' by the unsuspected and violent 'entrance' of the 'rough beast' that 'Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born' after 'twenty centuries of stony sleep'.

In this context, 'The Second Coming' seems to justify the view that the poet's function is analogous to that of a medium, the view that, like a medium, the poet is in contact with the primordial images and forces of the collective psyche which underlie the conscious surface of civilization. Interestingly enough, Yeats himself accepted the role of a medium or prophet. In a much-quoted letter to Ethel Mannin, in which he was trying to prove that, as Ellmann says, 'he was not indifferent or callous towards the rise of fascism',⁶² he wrote:

If you have my poems by you, look up a poem

called The Second Coming. It was written some sixteen or seventeen years ago and foretold what is happening

I am not callous, every nerve trembles with horror at what is happening in Europe, 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned.' (Letters, 851)

Apart from 'An Image from a Past Life' and 'The Second Coming', two more poems in this volume seem to be connected with Yeats's spiritualistic interests.

The first of these is 'Towards Break of Day', which reports a real incident in the life of Yeats and his wife when they were staying in a hotel, in January 1919. This is the strange experience of a 'double' or 'halved' dream where 'complementary images', images 'both alike and unlike'⁶³ appear in the sleep of the newly married couple.

Was it the double of my dream
The woman that by me lay
Dreamed, or did we halve a dream
Under the first cold gleam of day? (CP, 208)

As W. J. Keith⁶⁴ has discussed the 'complementary' imagery of this poem in a very competent manner, I will not go over the same ground again. Here it may suffice to suggest that the central situation of the poem owes something to Yeats's psychical investigations, for a '"double" or "halved" dream ... is just the kind of phenomenon the SPR documented over and over'.⁶⁵

Finally, in 'A Prayer for My Daughter' the poet assumes the role of a prophet once again, when he is 'possessed' by the frenzy of 'the future years', and in a state of 'excited reverie' employs his mediumistic imagination:

And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind

Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea. (CP, 211-12)

Again, the 'cataclysmic terribleness' of 'the future years'
appears to be influenced by the notions of the 'Imperator
Band'.⁶⁶

N O T E S

1. See The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, edited by P. Allt and R. K. Alspach (New York, 1957), p. 822.

2. Arnold Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 126-27.

3. See Poe's tale under that title.

4. See Goldman, p. 126.

5. Goldman, p. 127.

6. See Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats (London, 1954, second edition 1964), p. 259.

7. See Giorgio Melchiori's reference to Henn's view in The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the Work of W. B. Yeats (London, 1960), p. 36.

8. See Melchiori's reference to Ure's view in The Whole Mystery of Art, p. 37.

9. See Melchiori, p. 37.

10. See my M. A. paper '"The Medium's Mouth": Mediumship, Spiritualism, Psychical Research, and the Poetry of W. B. Yeats' (University of Warwick, 1978), p. 24, and my Mythologies and Visions [Μυθολογίες και Όράματα] (Athens, 1983), p. 108.

11. The Identity of Yeats, p. 259.

12. See Jon Stallworthy, Between the Lines: Yeats's Poetry in the Making (Oxford, 1963), p. 22.

13. In his 'Modus Operandi of Trance Communication According to Descriptions Received Through Mrs Osborne Leonard', Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 38 (1928-29), 49-100, Drayton Thomas remarks that a 'communicator' often conveys some message to a 'control', (and thus to the sitters, through the medium's vocal organs, which the 'control' is supposed to use) 'in the form of thought'. Yet these thoughts often emerge in the control's or in the medium's consciousness as 'hearing' or 'sight' so that the control says that it 'sees', for example, even when it is only a 'thought' that reaches it (p. 52). This extremely complex system of communication (communicator through control - control through medium), whether regarded as communication between different

spiritual entities, or between different strata of consciousness, accounts for much of the imprecision of mediumistic imagery and of mediumistic 'sight'. It is perhaps enough to say that if the control is supposed to 'manipulate' the medium's brain, the communicator is supposed to 'manipulate' both (p. 71). Communicators may also project a 'definite picture' instead of a 'thought' (p. 58). Yet, as Drayton's 'father' (the communicator in the characteristic case reported by C. Drayton Thomas) said: 'A medium who can see us and our surroundings does so in an imperfect way, an incomplete way, and is unable to bring full powers of observation to bear. It results from functioning in a condition that is not one's own' (pp. 65-66).

14. See also F. W. H. Myers, Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death, edited by Susy Smith (New York, 1961), p. 379.

15. See Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 110, note 5.

16. Quoted in Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances (Manchester, 1961), p. 3.

17. See James Webb, The Occult Underground (La Salle, Illinois, 1974), p. 296.

18. Webb, p. 139.

19. Chesney's story, 'describing a successful invasion of England' and the collapse that followed, became the prototype for the mass production of fiction of this type, and a 'standard device' for writers in Britain, France, Italy, and Germany, from the time of its publication up to 1914. See I. F. Clarke, Voices Prophesying War: 1763-1984 (London, 1966), pp. 30-46.

20. As Stuart Merrill wrote in 1896, Yeats 'has even collected the prophecies of various countries on this subject' (an impending European war and a subsequent revolution). See Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (London, 1949, second edition 1961), p. 100. As regards the 'magical armageddon', see Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Letters, edited by Clifford Bax (New York, 1941), p. 51, and T. R. Whitaker, Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History (Chapel Hill, 1964), p. 57.

21. See Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', p. 127.

22. For Yeats's comments see The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, pp. 823-25.

23. Stallworthy, p. 18.
24. Stallworthy, p. 18.
25. See her Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats (The Hague, 1970), p. 120.
26. Stallworthy, p. 21. Quoted in Perloff, p. 120.
27. Perloff, pp. 120-21.
28. See James Olney, 'W. B. Yeats's Daimonic Memory', Sewanee Review, 85 (1977), 583-603 (p. 591).
29. Olney, p. 599.
30. Olney, p. 600.
31. See Vieda Skultans, Intimacy and Ritual: A Study of Spiritualism, Mediums and Groups (London, 1974), p. 18.
32. See John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats (London, 1975), p. 23.
33. See 'Criticism as Language', originally published in a special issue of The Times Literary Supplement (1963) and reprinted in 20th Century Literary Criticism, edited by David Lodge (London, 1972), pp. 647-51: 'A work of literature ... is neither ever quite meaningless (mysterious or "inspired") nor even quite clear; it is, so to speak, suspended meaning' (p. 650).
34. The Identity of Yeats, p. 258.
35. Nandor Fodor, Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science (New York, 1966), p. 232.
36. See C. G. Jung, 'Psychology and Spiritualism', The Symbolic Life (London, 1977), p. 312.
37. See James Olney, 'The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung' in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 27-54 (p. 40).
38. Consider the analogy between the space-time continuum of nuclear physics and the theoretically unlimited domain of the psyche in note 15 to Chapter 6.
39. See, for example, G. A. Bozonis, Aesthetic Questions [Αισθητικοί Προβληματισμοί] (Athens, 1982), pp. 33-34.
40. Melchiori, The Whole Mystery of Art, p. 68.
41. See P. W. Martin, Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Works of Jung, Eliot and Tynbee (Boston, London and Henley, 1976), pp. 51-52.

42. See also Olney, 'The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung' in Yeats and the Occult, p. 44.

43. Alchemical Studies (London, 1967), p. 24.

44. See Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, pp. 258-59.

45. Perloff, Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats, p. 120.

46. See C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (Glasgow, 1967), p. 199; 'Towards the autumn of 1913 the pressure which I had felt was in me seemed to be moving outwards, as though there was something in the air. The atmosphere actually seemed to me darker than it had been.... In October, while I was on a journey, I was suddenly seized by an overpowering vision: I saw a monstrous flood covering all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps.... I realised that a frightful catastrophe was in progress'.

47. See also Stallworthy, Between the Lines, p. 24.

48. See 'The Image of the Divine Birth' in her Studies of Type-Images in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy (London, 1951), pp. 63-108.

49. See Bodkin, p. 68.

50. Bodkin, p. 64.

51. See Bodkin, p. 64.

52. See Stallworthy, p. 22.

53. See Harold Bloom, Yeats (New York, 1970), pages 321, 322.

54. See Lady Emily Lutens^y' account in Candles in the Sun (London, 1957), pp. 172-73. Alternatively you can see Webb, The Occult Underground, p. 104.

55. See The Archetype of Totalitarianism [Τό 'Αρχέτυπο του 'Ολοκληρωτισμού'], translated by Sophia Antzaka (Athens, 1972), esp. pp. 32-76.

56. The Archetype of Totalitarianism, pp. 21-22.

57. See The Archetype of Totalitarianism, pages 23 and 31.

58. The Archetype of Totalitarianism, p. 33.

59. The Archetype of Totalitarianism, p. 59.

60. The Archetype of Totalitarianism, p. 57.
61. See The Archetype of Totalitarianism, p. 66.
62. The Identity of Yeats, p. 258.
63. See W. J. Keith, 'Yeats's Double Dream', Modern Language Notes, 76, no. 8 (December 1961), 710-15 (p. 712).
64. See note 63 above.
65. See Goldman, p. 127.
66. Goldman, p. 127.

CHAPTER 8

FROM THE TOWER TO LAST POEMS

With the exception of 'All Souls' Night', 'The Second Coming' is perhaps Yeats's last major poem whose connection with his spiritualistic interests is vital. Still, a consideration of mediumship, spiritualism, and psychical research in a few of the poems that followed Michael Robartes and the Dancer may prove illuminating.

The first of these is 'The Tower' in the volume under that title (1928). In the first stanza of the second section, Yeats, pacing 'upon the battlements', 'stare[s]', and sends his 'mediumistic imagination' 'forth / Under the day's declining beam' to call

Images and memories
From ruin or from ancient trees,
For I would ask a question of them all. (CP, 219)

Like a medium invoking the spirits of the dead, the poet is summoning images of the past. But the passivity of mind that characterizes trance-mediums, or the narrator of 'The Second Coming' who is raped 'from above', is absent here. As Goldman notes, Yeats's later poetry suggests 'a metaphorical visionary' who 'often evinces an activity of spirit removed from the passivity of certain mediums'; this activity 'comes in part' from

the poet's 'assumption of an active sitter-researcher's role in relation to his own mediumistic imagination'.¹ Surely, it must also come from his assumption of an active role in relation to the mediumistic imagination (or the mediumship) of Mrs Yeats, who offered him a private 'laboratory' of psychical research.

This imagination is also employed in section vii of 'Meditations in Time of Civil War' ('I See Phantoms of Hatred ...'). As a metaphorical visionary, here the poet sees 'what's to come', the phantoms of 'the future years'. As in 'The Second Coming' and in 'A Prayer for My Daughter', the 'cataclysmic terribleness' of the nightmare vision reminds us of the notions of the 'Imperator Band' which, like Mrs Yeats's 'communicators', were concerned with the 'years of crisis' (V, 11).² In the first stanza, Yeats himself ('I'), not an impersonal narrator, assumes the role of the prophet-medium who will relate his visions in stanzas 2, 3, and 4.

I climb to the tower-top and lean upon broken stone
Frenzies bewilder, reveries perturb the mind;
Monstrous familiar images swim to the mind's eye.
(CP, 231)

The vision of the second stanza is 'a vision of hatred' which, as Unterecker says, 'offers an image of gigantic violence',³ reminding us of the relevant passages in the 'Note-book of Stainton Moses' (Appendix D): '... Then comes the struggle And now a great convulsion is taking place and the crisis of the struggle is at hand', 'a conflict dire and dread[ful?]'.

... In cloud-pale rags, or
in lace,
The rage-driven, rage-tormented, and rage-hungry troop,
Trooper belabouring trooper, biting at arm or at face,

Plunges towards nothing, arms and fingers spreading
 wide
 For the embrace of nothing (CP, 231)

Yeats recognizes this kind of cataclysmic violence as 'symbolic of impending world disorder', a phase immediately preceding dark of the moon in his lunar circle.⁴ In the third stanza, our attention is suddenly shifted to another vision which is seemingly unrelated to the previous one — an instance suggesting the 'psychic dissociation' of mediums:⁵

 Their legs long, delicate and slender, aquamarine their
 eyes,
 Magical unicorns bear ladies on their backs (CP, 231)

Here the symbol of the unicorn appears for the first time in the poems, and it has a specific significance: it is neither the unicorn of Alchemy, a symbol of Mercurius and of 'the spirit of life that leads the way to resurrection', nor a symbol of violent birth 'springing out of the womb of destruction'.⁶ (See T. Sturge Moore's Bookplate for Mr Yeats with which section vii of 'Meditations in Time of Civil War' is often associated.)

Instead, as Melchiori remarks, and as Yeats himself wrote, it is a symbol of intuition, 'the faculty to see into the mystery, the gift of the seer and the poet'.⁷ It is a symbol 'of the Heart's Fullness' through which the 'Phantoms of Hatred' of the previous stanza are counterpointed and counterpoised, and of the unity of the prophet-medium and the poet: the poet and the seer, as once the poet and the magician, go side by side.⁸ Moreover, it provides a link between the visions of stanzas 2 and 4. Having 'proved' his visionary gift through images of strange beauty, Yeats presents us with an even more dreadful vision 'of

the coming Emptiness':

The cloud-pale unicorns ...
 Give place to an indifferent multitude, give place
 To brazen hawks (CP, 232)

The 'Magical unicorns' of the previous stanza give place to 'an indifferent multitude' — a mob that does not take into account the medium's prophetic visions in this poem, in 'The Second Coming' and elsewhere. They also give place to the monstrous image of 'brazen hawks', which corresponds to Yeats's vision of 'a brazen winged beast' (W & B, 103) at about the time he was writing On Baile's Strand, or, in the memories of those who lived through the two World Wars, to the roaring 'laughter' of air raids. But, despite the horror of his third vision, Yeats is 'content to be prophet':⁹

... Nor self-delighting reverie,
 Nor hate of what's to come, nor pity for what's gone,
 Nothing but grip of claw, and the eye's complacency,
 The innumerable clanging wings that have put out the
 moon

... The abstract joy,
 The half-read wisdom of daemonic images,
 Suffice the ageing man (CP, 232)

As Unterecker says, the third vision is 'one more prophecy of a new and more horrible 2000-year cycle, parallel to but in all ways opposing the Christian one';¹⁰ still, 'hate of what's to come' cannot prevent the coming 'Emptiness', the invasion of the 'brazen hawks', as it cannot disturb the spiral pattern of history in A Vision. Having climbed the 'upward path' to 'the tower-top', the poet-medium achieves the bird's eye-view, his apotheosis as the poetic and psychological Self of which I spoke in Chapter 6. Here, again, he is liberated 'from the world

of cyclical nature', and, 'endowed with "creative power", he may "rejoice" in the midst of tragedy'.¹¹

In 'Fragments', another poem in The Tower, the word 'medium' occurs for the first time in The Collected Poems:

I
 Locke sank into a swoon;
 The Garden died;
 God took the spinning-jenny
 Out of his side.

II
 Where got I that truth?
 Out of a medium's mouth,
 Out of nothing it came,
 Out of the forest loam,
 Out of dark night where lay
 The crowns of Nineveh.

(CP, 240-241)

In the first 'fragment' Yeats seems to adopt Blake's 'happy oversimplification' that Locke was 'largely responsible for imprisoning man in the cage of the five senses'.¹² Yeats's own hate for Locke is directly expressed in his prose writings, as when he says that Locke, together with Descartes and Newton, 'took away the world and gave us its excrement instead' or that he could see 'in a sort of nightmare vision the "primary qualities" torn from the side of Locke ... some obscure person somewhere inventing the spinning-jenny' — the spinning-jenny being a symbol of 'the Industrial Revolution which followed on Locke's mechanical philosophy'.¹³ Empiricism, as it developed mainly through the works of Locke and Hume, suggests that observation and experiment are the only sources of human knowledge, or, at least, its ultimate standards of judgement, following the theory that our knowledge of the world depends on (1) our ability to touch, see, hear, taste,

and smell or (2) on what we can discover through the five senses.¹⁴ In the second 'fragment' Yeats, here a 'spiritualist' rather than a 'psychical researcher', rejects both parts of this proposition, in a poetic effort to reverse the dogma 'nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu'. Unlike a psychical researcher, he assumes the a priori existence of the spiritual world and the importance of a mediumistic sixth sense (his own mediumistic imagination) as regards our knowledge of the world ('truth'): 'Where got I that truth? / Out of a medium's mouth' it came. But, despite the conviction that 'truth' can come 'out of nothing', out of a purely spiritual domain, the metaphor of mediumship allows Yeats to shift responsibility to Spiritus Mundi once more, and to deny the personal character of his views. If, in 'The Second Coming', the source of his mediumistic knowledge was called Spiritus Mundi, here he does not name it ('nothing'); instead, as Ellmann notes, he 'emphasizes its mysterious, unfathomable, and pow^erful nature'.¹⁵

The last poem in The Tower which is related to Yeats's spiritualistic interests, as well as to his use of the metaphor of mediumship, is 'All Souls' Night'. Indeed, 'All Souls' Night' may be regarded as Yeats's seance-poem par excellence, being his major poetic affirmation of what he called 'a Communion of the Living and the Dead' (V, 23). Here the metaphor of mediumship and the Yeatsian 'sense of the past' to which I referred in Chapter 3 find their most direct expression.

Here the poet-medium sends forth his imagination to invite his dead friends, those who shared in his occult interests, to his 'haunted house-mind', 'the room' in Broad Street, Oxford, where he was living when he wrote the poem.¹⁶

Midnight has come, and the great Christ Church Bell
And many a lesser bell sound through the room;
And it is All Souls' Night,
And two long glasses brimmed with muscatel
Bubble upon the table. A ghost may come;
For it is a ghost's right,
His element is so fine
Being sharpened by his death,
To drink from the wine-breath
While our gross palates drink from the whole wine.

(CP, 256)

The 'cult of the dead' which characterizes this first stanza is based on the belief of the supra-temporality of the soul, as well as on the universal psychological need of the living to do something for the departed (consider the lighting of candles in Greek orthodox churches).¹⁷

But here this cult takes a specifically spiritualistic turn. Already in the first stanza, there is an indirect reference to the practice of country-people who, as Lady Gregory was informed, 'leave an offering of food — spring-water and potatoes will suffice — for the "fairies"', a custom for which Yeats found a parallel in modern spiritualism:¹⁸ 'Certain London Spiritualists for some years past have decked out a Christmas tree with presents that have each the names of some dead child upon them ...' (V, 221).

But Yeats's symbolic offer to his dead friends is more 'spiritual' than spring-water, potatoes, or Christmas presents. It is a glass 'brimmed with muscatel' from whose 'breath' W. T. Horton, Florence Emery, and MacGregor

Mathers are invited to drink. Moreover, the reference to spiritualism is suggested by 'Christ Church Bell' and 'muscatel' (symbolic association-rhyme)¹⁹ which are connected by the fact that both are relevant to the invocation of spirits: the Bell of Christ Church 'and many a lesser bell' awake the spirits of the dead who are drawn to our world by the earthly breath of wine.

Horton died in 1919, Florence Farr Emery in 1917, and Mathers in 1918; thus their 'ghosts' do not appear in the records of seances that Yeats kept during the spiritualist 'interlude'. But, considering the Automatic Script of Georgie Hyde-Lees, Yeats's first honoured guest, W. T. Horton, had already reserved a chair in the spiritualistic encounter of 'All Souls' Night' a few months before the poem was composed. 'Horton's the first I call. He loved strange thought ...' (CP, 257). Horton did love 'strange thought': although he did not trust Mathers's Golden Dawn, he was attracted to the millenarian Brotherhood of the New Life, an occult sect to which I referred in Chapter 4.²⁰ Still, he was very unsympathetic to Yeats's spiritualistic involvement, and on July 25, 1914, he wrote to him:

It makes me absolutely sick to see & hear you
so devoted to Spiritualism & its investigation

All this Spiritism & Spiritistic investigation
leads to nothing. It is just turning round & round
in a circle & is never a spiral²¹

On May 24, 1919, Yeats had a session with his wife in which he asked her if 'Thomas' (the control) had 'anything to say about Horton', his recently dead friend, and

'Thomas' answered: 'He says he believes now much that he denied before he says he is so happy that he weeps.... He says leave a chair for him on Monday' (May 30).²² It is not unlikely that Yeats considered Horton's 'return' possible, as both he and Georgie knew that in the Morning Circle of 'Julia's Bureau', a sort of Spiritualist Club set up by W. T. Stead (founder of the London Spiritualist Alliance) to enable the living to get into touch with their dead, a chair at the head of the table was always reserved for a spirit.²³ We cannot know whether Horton occupied the chair left for him at Yeats's open house on Monday. But we do know that in 'All Souls' Night' Yeats reserved a vacant chair 'at the top of the table' for Horton.

In the fifth stanza Yeats invokes the spirit of Florence Farr Emery, another dear friend who 'loved strange thought' (she had been a member of the Golden Dawn), and then

... I call up MacGregor from the grave,
 For in my first hard springtime we were friends,
 Although of late estranged.
 I thought him half a lunatic, half knave,
 And told him so, but friendship never ends;
 And what if mind seem changed,
 And it seem changed with the mind,
 When thoughts rise up unbid
 On generous things that he did
 And I grow half contented to be blind! (CP, 258)

The conflict of opinion between Yeats and Mathers suggested in this stanza is connected with the split in the Order of the Golden Dawn, a split that has been discussed by historians of the occult and by Yeats scholars.²⁴ What should be noted here is that the conflict

between Yeats and Mathers, as well as that between Yeats and Horton, is 'resolved' through poetic 'invocation'. Thinking in terms of analogy, it is interesting that, as Dr. Vieda Skultans has shown in a recent study of 'Spiritualism, Mediums, and Groups', spiritualistic sessions are largely responses to conflicts, healing rituals whose major element is 'the "acting out" of conflicts'.²⁵ In this sense, 'All Souls' Night' may be partly regarded as a poetic ritual where the evoker of spirits 'settles his differences' with his dead companions. Horton had suggested that the creation of beauty was incompatible with Yeats's spiritualistic interests, that the latter's investigations destroyed Yeats's 'wonderful poetry' and wasted much of his time and energy: 'Where are the songs of yesteryear', he asked on July 25, 1914, 'the whispering of unseen beauty that melts us to tears with emotion'.²⁶ 'All Souls' Night' is partly Yeats's answer to Horton's criticism:

... I have a marvellous thing to say,
 A certain marvellous thing
 None but the living mock,
 Though not for sober ear;
 It may be all that hear
 Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock.
(CP, 256: my italics)

'None but the living mock' the 'marvellous thing', the 'unseen', spiritual beauty of the 'Communion of the Living and the Dead' — certainly not the ghost of Horton, who now 'is so happy that he weeps'. As for Mathers, 'friendship never ends'.

A further psychological dimension of this seance-

poem is suggested by the number of Yeats's 'guests': they are three, and, together with their host, they should form another mandala (here a cross), whether the table referred to in the first stanza is round, square, or has the shape of a parallelogram. As we saw in the previous chapter, the mandala is a symbol of 'psychic wholeness'. And as spiritualists say, they sit in a circle because 'the circle has no beginning and no end; it is perfect',²⁷ (the circle of Yeats's drawings illustrating the arrangement of sitters in his records of seances). In psychological terms, psychic wholeness results here from the encounter of this and 'the Other World', of this and 'the other' side of consciousness which corresponds to 'the mythic land of the dead'. This encounter is a joyful event, for the living person, here the poet-medium, achieves wholeness by attaining, so to speak, its missing half; it is a sacred wedding, a mysterium coniunctionis.²⁸ Yeats attains Horton, whom, as the Automatic Script of May 24, 1919, suggests, he considered 'a contrary or opposite and a kind of spiritual Daimon'.²⁹ As a joyful event, the 'Communion of the Living and the Dead' is celebrated in the proper way; hence the offering of presents to dead children by 'Certain London Spiritualists', the dancing girls represented in Greek sarcophagi, the banquets on Etruscan tombs, the custom, in some regions, to hold a picnic on the graves on All Souls' Day, and the glass 'brimmed with muscatel' offered to Yeats's dead.³⁰

Further and more obvious mandalas appear in the

sixth stanza of the poem, where Yeats speaks of Florence Emmery's posthumous journey:

Before that end much had she ravelled out ...
 On the soul's journey. How it is whirled about,
 Wherever the orbit of the moon can reach,
 Until it plunge into the sun;
 And there, free and yet fast,
 Being both Chance and Choice,
 Forget its broken toys
 And sink into its own delight at last. (CP, 258)

Here the age-old symbol of psychic wholeness appears in the soul's whirling about, 'the orbit of the moon', and its eventual plunging 'into the sun', the 'sun wheel' of the neolithic epoch being man's oldest mandala, as far as we know.³¹ 'There' the soul of Florence Emery will be 'free and yet fast', 'both Chance and Choice', an integration of opposites, and will 'sink into its own delight at last': it will achieve wholeness in death, if death is regarded in itself as a mysterium coniunctionis of this and 'the other' side of life.

The symbol of the mandala reappears in the last stanza, where the poet declares that he is so 'bound' in his thought that

I need no other thing,
 Wound in mind's wandering
 As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound. (CP, 259)

In psychological terms, Yeats suggests that, through his contact with the dead, he himself has achieved psychic wholeness, that he has come into possession of a hidden truth which makes him self-sufficient. 'No living man can drink from the whole wine' (CP, 259); as the alchemists believed, no fragmentary personality can experience life in its fullness.³² Yeats, however, being 'Wound in mind's

wandering', like a mummy that is wound 'in the mummy-cloth', suggests that he has reached the 'deep centre' of the mandala, the Self as presented in Chapter 6, and has 'mummy truths to tell' (CP, 259).

As far as I know, it has never been noted that Yeats's 'mummy truths' are not revealed in this poem (with the exception of the short reference to the soul's journey in the sixth stanza). This 'inconsistency' is explained by the fact that 'All Souls' Night' is subtitled 'Epilogue to "A Vision"': the 'mummy truths' of the poem ('both old truths and truths that involve mummies',³³ the dead) are revealed in A Vision. But, considering the poem in itself, the argument posed in Chapter 6 with reference to 'Ego Dominus Tuus' is relevant here: Yeats has already told us what can be 'said' about the psychological aspects of his 'communion' with the dead through symbols which pervade and enrich the expositional surface.

Yeats's use of symbols is consistent indeed: in stanzas 2 and 9 a symbol of psychic wholeness appears as the Leitmotiv in a symphonic poem:

It may be all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock. (CP, 256)

For maybe all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock. (CP, 259)

The clock, with its round or square dial (analogous to the surface of the poet-medium's 'table' in the first stanza), its centre and its moving hands, is in itself a modern mandala, man's technological symbol of wholeness: it holds together the disparate parts of consciousness

around the centre which is protected by the circle, the sulcus primigenius of which I spoke in Chapter 7.³⁴ Moreover, as its hands move about an unmoved and timeless centre, T. S. Eliot's 'still point of the turning world', the clock suggests the 'intersection of the timeless / With time', a realm of totality where flux and pattern, life and eternity meet, and polarities such as life and death are effaced.³⁵ At the poem's end, the hands of the clock have formed a full circle ('an hour') around the centre: Yeats's imaginative encounter with his dead, or with 'the other' side of consciousness, has resulted in imaginative possession of wholeness. Wholeness, integration, totality, is also suggested by the fact that the poem contains ten stanzas of ten lines each.³⁶ This seems to be an instance of symbolic symmetry. Yeats - 'occultist', 'astrologer', 'spiritualist' - must have known that ten is a 'magic number', the sum of the first four numbers (1+2+3+4), four being especially connected with the primordial pattern of the mandala: the square, four radii quartering the circle, the Cross, the Trinity plus the Devil, Yeats and his three spirit-visitors, his drawings in his manuscript records of seances, 'The Great Wheel' and diagrams in A Vision.

'Crazy Jane on God' (Words for Music Perhaps) also deals with an imaginative mediumistic encounter of this and 'the Other World' in the 'realm of totality', in Yeats's Anima Mundi, in the Divine Memory, or in Jung's 'collective unconscious'. Crazy Jane 'visualizes God as

a repository of all archetypes', as her God is a store-house of images where nothing is lost:³⁷ 'All things remain in God'. Indeed, the poem is a collage of images whose apparent link is the refrain, as Yeats moves freely in time and space, reminding us, once more, of the 'psychic dissociation' of mediums. In the first stanza we have the aftermath of a love scene. Crazy Jane is abandoned, but she trusts the Divine Memory:

That lover of a night
Came when he would,
Went in the dawning light
Whether I would or no;
Men come, men go;
All things remain in God. (CP, 293)

Then there is a sudden shift to a battle (Thermopylae?) which never ends in the mind's eye.³⁸ One 'has need but of Swedenborg's keen ears and eagle sight to hear a noise of swords in the empty valley' (IIWFT, 28-29).

Banners choke the sky;
Men-at-arms tread;
Armoured horses neigh
Where the great battle was
In the narrow pass:
All things remain in God. (CP, 293)

But the vision of the third stanza is more 'mediumistic': a ghostly manifestation appears before the eyes of Crazy Jane and wild Jack:

Before their eyes a house
That from childhood stood
Uninhabited, ruinous,
Suddenly lit up
From door to top:
All things remain in God. (CP, 294)

This sudden invasion of the supernatural is closely connected with the analogous scene in Purgatory, when a

window is miraculously lit up in an uninhabited house. As in Purgatory, and, of course, in The Words upon the Window-pane, Yeats employs here the 'haunted house' metaphor: the uninhabited, ruinous house is peopled by the ghosts of those that had once lived in it, for 'All things remain in God', and can be revitalized before the eyes of a medium. So, as Unterecker says, 'in the last stanza, wild Jack is not lost even though dead'.³⁹ 'Men come, men go'; still,

My body makes no moan
But sings on:
All things remain in God. (CP, 294)

The central metaphors in three of the Last Poems (1936-39) are also inspired by Yeats's interest in supernormal phenomena and/or mediumship.

In 'The Ghost of Roger Casement' Yeats exploits the dramatic potential of the spiritualistic motif of the returned ghost. Like Swift in The Words upon the Window-pane, or Parnell in 'To a Shade', the ghost of Roger Casement returns, and makes a 'sudden noise' that disturbs every 'Tom and Dick', those who claimed that Casement was a 'pervert', themselves being of modern degradation and corruption:⁴⁰

O what has made that sudden noise?
What on the threshold stand?...
The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door. (CP, 352)

In 'The Spirit Medium' the word 'medium' occurs for the second and last time in The Collected Poems and is closely connected with the meaning and form of

this poem, where Yeats dramatizes his lifelong interest in the investigation of 'occult' wisdom.⁴¹ Both meaning and form of 'The Spirit Medium', this 'strange, powerful, though little known'^{poem} were discussed in a recent essay by Stuart Hirschberg in a very competent manner.⁴² Still, my comments may throw more light on the connection of this poem with Yeats's spiritualistic interests.

In the first stanza, Hirschberg notes, the poet suggests that he has lost 'touch with his everyday world' (p. 311); contact with the realm of the dead, the 'realm of totality', seems to have weakened his interest in art (poetry, music), as well as his interest in life itself:

Poetry, music, I have loved, and yet
 Because of those new dead
 That come into my soul and escape
 Confusion of the bed (CP, 366)

The cryptic line 'Confusion of the bed' may seem at first a reference to dreaming, but if we consider the 'Confusion of the death-bed' in 'The Cold Heaven', it is a reference to the unwillingness of the dead 'to accept the fact that they are, indeed, dead'.⁴³ As Yeats wrote in his essay on Swedenborg, 'the dead do not yet know they are dead, but stumble on amid visionary smoke and noise, and ... angelic spirits seek to awaken them but still in vain' (IIWFT, 46). If this is what Yeats had in mind, the first stanza is less obscure than it seems. The poet, as a metamp^horical visionary, is identified with 'the spirit medium' of the title: the spirits of the dead 'come into [his] soul' in the same

way that they 'possess' a medium and thus 'escape / Confusion of the bed' ('the ghost is simple, the man heterogeneous and confused' (PA, 30)). Yeats's assumption of a passive medium's role is also suggested by some formal features: as Hirschberg says, 'the change from a life of active enjoyment to a state of passive acquiescence' is suggested 'by the change from the narrator as subject (in "I have loved") to the narrator as object ("Because of those new dead / That come into my soul")', as well as by the skilful shift 'from the assertive trochaic meter to less emphatic iambic feet for the remaining stanzas of the poem' (p. 312). The last four lines of the first stanza also suggest renunciation of personality on the poet-medium's part. Being in touch with Spiritus Mundi, the medium is a vehicle for 'what is past, or passing, or to come' (CP, 218) and must give up his personality in order to be of service not only to the dead but also to the 'unbegotten', those souls that are waiting to be born.⁴⁴

Or those begotten or unbegotten
 Perring in a band,
I bend my body to the spade
Or grope with a dirty hand. (CP, 366)

Now 'Confusion of the bed' assumes a second possible meaning: it is the confusion of the dead as well as the confusion (agony) of new-born babies, two states described with much detail by occultists and modern obstetricians respectively — bed being 'the place of generation, birth, and death'.⁴⁵ 'Those begotten or

unbegotten' are all 'Perning in a band', with the wheel of death and rebirth, in the spirit medium's vision. (Many spiritualists accept the notion of reincarnation.) Considering the above, the refrain seems to stress the medium's passivity ('I bend my body') and at the same time suggests that his task is analogous to that of a grave-digger:⁴⁶ the poet-medium digs out 'mummy truths'.

In the second stanza, the surrender of the medium's mind to the images of Spiritus Mundi is suggested by the hypnotic repetition of the words 'begotten or unbegotten':⁴⁷

Or those begotten or unbegotten,
For I would not recall
Some that being unbegotten
Are not individual,
But copy some one action,
Moulding it of dust or sand (CP, 366)

This repetition reminds us of an incantation and of the analogy between poetic and mediumistic 'hypnotic trance', noted by Yeats in 'The Symbolism of Poetry':

The purpose of rhythm ... is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake ... by hushing us with an alluring monotony ... to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols. If certain sensitive persons listen persistently to the ticking of a watch ... they fall into the hypnotic trance (G & E, 247)

But the second stanza remains obscure if we do not consider Hirschberg's suggestion (p. 313) that the souls described in it 'have no individual personalities' ('Are not individual'), 'but exist only insofar as they are bound together through the same fate' — the

idea employed in 'Cuchulain Comforted', where the Shrouds chant: '"We thread the needles" eyes, and all we do / All must together do' (CP, 395).⁴⁸ A passage from Yeats's essay on Swedenborg is also relevant here: 'They [spirits] have bodies as plastic as their minds that flow so readily into the mould of ours' ('But copy some one action / Moulding it of dust or sand'), and Swedenborg 'remembers having seen the face of a spirit change continuously and yet keep always a certain generic likeness' (IIWFT, 35). To resume the (suggested) meaning of this difficult stanza: Yeats 'believed' that spirits constitute 'one meditorial communion' formed in 'moments of common memory' through 'their collective imagination'.⁴⁹ But there is also a communion between this and 'the Other World', whose expression is moulded by the living ('the mould of ours') in the 'realm of totality', Yeats's Spiritus Mundi or Jung's 'collective unconscious'. The task of the poet as medium is to express this complicated relationship — even at the risk of being 'unintelligible' (CP, 387) or forgetting his love of 'Poetry, music'. Obscure as this is, it is perhaps the only possible 'explanation' of the second stanza with reference to Yeats's spiritualistic interests.

In the last stanza, the spirit medium's renunciation of active life and enjoyment finds its most economical expression:

An old ghost's thoughts are lightning,
To follow is to die;
Poetry and music I have banished,
But the stupidity

Of root, shoot, blossom or clay
Makes no demand.

I bend my body to the spade
Or grope with a dirty hand.

(CP, 367)

'To follow is to die' seems to refer to the medium's metaphorical death, the extinction of his ego-consciousness,⁵⁰ for 'An Old ghost's thoughts are lightning': they 'possess' or 'rape' the medium's mind 'from above' (the sky), as his mind is (en)lightened for a moment by the sudden entry of the supernatural into our natural order. This entry is analogous to the rape of Leda, 'the staggering girl', by the Swan. In 'Leda and the Swan', as well as in 'The Second Coming', the 'rape from above' is followed by a return to consciousness, suggested by two questions-sibylline comments at the end of each poem. The last stanza of 'The Spirit Medium' suggests another return to consciousness, to the initial dilemma regarding an artist's attachment to spiritualism. The narrator has 'banished' poetry and music, and all that remains is 'the stupidity / Of root, shoot, blossom or clay'. This reference to the four stages in the life of a plant,⁵¹ or to 'The Four Ages of Man' in 'Supernatural Songs', reminds us, once more, of the wheel of life, the 'perning' of the first stanza. But the word 'stupidity' suggests a cyclical pattern or process that, despite the poet-medium's renunciation of life and art, is mindless.⁵² Here the poet-medium has not been able to reach the centre of the mandala, as the final repetition of the italicized refrain hints: he still gropes 'with a dirty hand' in

search of 'mummy truths'. Like a literal medium, he goes round and round the ultimate truth of the 'beyond'. 'The stupidity / Of root, shoot, blossom or clay', the cyclical pattern, 'Makes no demand', in the same way that the hypnotic trance of mediums makes no demand on consciousness.⁵³ Here Horton is justified in saying that Yeats's 'Spiritistic investigation' was 'turning round & round in a circle & ... never a spiral'.

The last of Last Poems which is connected with Yeats's spiritualistic interests is 'The Apparitions'. As all commentators agree, fear of death ('of the increasing Night / That opens her mystery and fright') is the major theme of this poem, which is founded on a series of (seven or fifteen) death dreams that haunted Yeats in his last years after his illness in Majorca.⁵⁴ The connection with Yeats's spiritualistic interests is suggested by the following passage from his letter of November 11, 1933, to Mrs Shakespeare:

Did I tell you that my apparition came a seventh time? As I awoke I saw a child's hand and arm and head - faintly self luminous - holding above - I was lying on my back - a five of diamonds or hearts I was [not] sure which. It was held as if the child was standing at the head of the bed. Is the meaning some fortune teller's meaning attached to the card or does it promise me five months or five years? Five years would be about long enough to finish my autobiography and bring out A Vision. (Letters, 817-18)⁵⁵

The 'faintly luminous' 'hand and arm and head' remind us of the luminous forms of the seances at Madame Bisson's in Paris (1914, Chapter 1). Moreover, Yeats considered this to be a prophetic dream, similar to those that

announced the deaths of four Pollexfens (Chapter 5). In fact, he lived a little over five years after writing this letter⁵⁶ (five years, two months and seventeen days), and, had he known this in 'the Other World', he would have considered it another instance of mediumistic foreknowledge.

But the connection of this poem with Yeats's spiritualistic interests does not stop there; it is also suggested by the obvious fact that in 'The Apparitions' he is disenchanted with the spiritualistic doctrine of survival. This disenchantment is indicated in a manuscript book he kept at the time he composed the poem, some eleven months before he died: 'The first apparition was the passage of a coat upon a coathanger slowly across room - it was extraordinarily terrifying'.⁵⁷

Fifteen apparitions have I seen;
The worst a coat upon a coat-hanger. (CP, 387)

The haunting refrain presents us with a nightmare image whose power depends on spiritualistic 'disembodied horror'.⁵⁸ This image reminds us of some classic 'metaphysical' thrillers and once 'B-movies' produced during the last part of Yeats's lifetime but transcends their 'metaphysical horror' and suggests the utter indifference of the natural world towards man's death: 'the worst' of all 'apparitions' is the poet's own empty coat, a scarecrow image,⁵⁹ crossing his room. Here Yeats has moved far away from the conviction that the 'spirit-guide' who once 'visited' him through Peters 'could be nobody but William Blake', or from the last triumphant couplets of 'Shepherd and Goatherd' which, like Donne's 'Death thou

shalt die', were a further poetic expression of Paul's, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (I Corinthians 15). The refrain suggests that the reality of death is always present to the mind, symbolized by an indifferent and mechanical⁶⁰ coat-hanger, 'signifying nothing'.

Not only the refrain of 'The Apparitions' but also some of its formal features suggest that 'the ageing man' is now disenchanted with the spiritualistic promise of survival. Already in the first rhyming couplet of the poem we have an irony-rhyme where 'apparition' is undermined by 'derision':

Because there is safety in derision
I talked about an apparition,
I took no trouble to convince,
Or seem plausible to a man of sense,
Distrustful of that popular eye
Whether it be bold or sly.

(CP, 386-87)

Whether the reference to 'an apparition' suggests 'derision' of the 'man of sense', the 'safe' man that, like Swift in The Words upon the Window-pane, Yeats distrusted and hated, or of Yeats himself, who had been mocked and ridiculed for his attachment to 'spooks', or both ('Derided and deriding' like Dante), the irony of the first couplet seems to indicate that Yeats's spiritualistic involvement was his way of dealing with something other than ghostly apparitions. The symbolic association-rhyme of the last rhyming couplet ('Night' / 'fright') suggests that this 'something' is fear of death:

When a man grows old his joy
Grows more deep day after day,
His empty heart is full at length,

But he has need of all that strength
 Because of the increasing Night
 That opens her mystery and fright. (CP, 387)

The reader of some of Yeats's published 'spiritualistic' texts, of his statement that he 'was born a natural believer', or of poems such as 'Shepherd and Goatherd', would have thought that the poet did not fear 'the increasing Night', the moment when he 'would lie down and die', forgetting the 'body and its stupidity' till 'all's arranged in one clear view' and he 'sinks at last into the night' (CP, 393-94: my italics). But, as I have suggested in the course of this thesis, the impression one gets from reading many of Yeats's unpublished spiritualistic writings is quite different.

From the psychological point of view, it is considered 'hygienic', so to speak, 'to discover in death a goal towards which one can strive', for shrinking away from death may rob the later and last years of life of their purpose.⁶¹ Spiritualism offers its adherents such a goal by stressing that death is not an end but a growing beyond oneself, an integration of human personality, not something that should fill man with 'fright'. Despite Yeats's desperate efforts and his solemn declaration that he 'was born a natural believer', it seems that spiritualistic doctrine did not offer him such a goal, for, as I noted in Chapter 2, he was never a spiritualist. He believed in a relationship 'of some sort' between this and 'the Other World', in the same way that he 'believed' in reincarnation 'hypothetically on the one hand, or metaphorically on the other hand'.⁶² As James Olney says, Yeats 'partly believed in

reincarnation as a literal doctrine, or he wholly believed in it as a nonliteral doctrine, but he nowhere subscribes to it both wholly and literally'.⁶³ The same is true as regards spiritualistic doctrine.

The difference between what Yeats, as a man, wanted to believe, and what Yeats, as a thinker, could believe is versified in 'The Man and the Echo', a poem composed some five months after 'The Apparitions' was written.⁶⁴ There the Man says that 'all seems evil' until the day when he 'would lie down and die', taking delight in the prospect of sinking 'into the night' (CP, 393-94). The Echo's ironical response is 'Lie down and die', 'Into the night', but the Man puts a crucial question:

O Rocky Voice,
Shall we in that great night rejoice?
What do we know but that we face
One another in this place? (CP, 394)

The function of the refrain of 'The Apparitions' is analogous to that of the Echo. Its powerful 'sense of the past' (Yeats's 'coat upon a coat-hanger') suggests the importance of our present state of existence; at the same time, it questions the prospect of life-after-death, the 'life-in-death' celebrated in 'Byzantium' (CP, 280). But, as in so many of his occult writings, Yeats hedges his bets carefully once more:

Because of the increasing Night
That opens her mystery and fright. (CP, 387: my italics)

The Great Night is mysterious and frightful. Like a psychical researcher and unlike a convinced materialist or spiritualist, here Yeats considers the possibility that death may be 'a

door that opens upon the human world from a world beyond' and leads man, 'on the wings of the night',⁶⁵ to a domain of mystery and infinite possibilities.

N O T E S

1. 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research' in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series (London, 1976), pp. 108-29 (p. 127).

2. See also Goldman, pp. 124-25.

3. John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats (London, 1975), p. 180.

4. See Unterecker, p. 181.

5. This is similar to the psychic dissociation of the insane. See C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (Glasgow, 1967), p. 354.

6. In connection with the symbolism of the unicorn see C. G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, translated by R. F. C. Hull, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham and G. Adler, second edition (London, 1968), p. 437, and Giorgio Melchiori, The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the Work of W. B. Yeats (London, 1960), p. 63 and pp. 57-58.

7. Melchiori, p. 71.

8. For an interesting discussion of the relationship between Yeats the poet and Yeats the magician see George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn (London and Basingstoke, 1974), pp. 99-120.

9. Unterecker, p. 181.

10. Unterecker, p. 181.

11. See J. R. Mulryne, 'The Last Poems' in Yeats: Last Poems, edited by Jon Stallworthy (London and Basingstoke, 1968), pp. 138-59 (p. 140).

12. See Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats (London, 1954, second edition 1964), p. 263.

13. See A. N. Jeffares, A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (London, 1968), p. 293.

14. See Theophilos Veikos, Philosophy and Science [Φιλοσοφία και 'Επιστήμη] (Athens, 1980), p. 76.

15. The Identity of Yeats, p. 264.

16. See also Goldman, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical

Research' in Yeats and the Occult, p. 127, and Jeffares, A Commentary, p. 314.

17. See also C. G. Jung, Psychological Reflections, selected and edited by Jolande Jacobi (London and Henley, 1953, second edition 1971), p. 327.

18. See Kathleen Raine, 'Hades Wrapped in Cloud' in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 80-107 (p. 88).

19. See Marjorie Perloff, Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats (The Hague, 1970), p. 78.

20. As regards Horton and the Brotherhood of the New Life, see George Mills Harper, W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship (London, 1980), p. 6.

21. W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton, p. 41.

22. W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton, p. 72.

23. W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: 'George as well as Yeats surely knew about the meetings of the Morning Circle at which "a chair was always placed for Julia at the head of the table"' (p. 72).

24. See, for example, George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn.

25. See Vieda Skultans, Intimacy and Ritual: A Study of Spiritualism, Mediums and Groups (London, 1974), p. 60.

26. See Letters to W. B. Yeats, edited by R. J. Finneran, G. Mills Harper and W. M. Murphy (London, 1977), p. 297.

27. Skultans, p. 44.

28. See C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 346.

29. Harper, W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton, p. 71.

30. See also Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 346.

31. See P. W. Martin, Experiment in Depth (London, 1976), p. 110.

32. See Virginia Moore, The Unicorn (New York, 1954), p. 297.

33. John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats, p. 198.

34. Martin, Experiment in Depth, p. 52.
35. See also Theodore Ziolkowski, The Novels of Hermann Hesse (Princeton, N. J., 1967), pp. 157-59.
36. See Unterecker, p. 198.
37. Unterecker, p. 228.
38. See Unterecker, p. 228, and Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, pp. 276-78.
39. A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats, p. 229.
40. See also Unterecker, pp. 269-70.
41. See Stuart Hirschberg, 'An Encounter with the Supernatural in Yeats's "The Spirit Medium"' in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 311-16 (p. 311).
42. 'An Encounter with the Supernatural', p. 311. (See note 41 above.)
43. Hirschberg, p. 312.
44. See Hirschberg, p. 312.
45. Hirschberg, p. 312.
46. See Hirschberg, p. 312.
47. See Hirschberg, p. 313.
48. See also Hirschberg, p. 313.
49. Hirschberg, pp. 313-14.
50. See also Hirschberg, p. 315: 'Yeats does not merely mean the literal death of the medium, but, more significantly, the extinction of the medium's personality - his "death", in effect, to the things of this world'.
51. See also Hirschberg, p. 315.
52. The medium is 'completely dominated' by an 'essentially mindless process of existence' (Hirschberg, p. 315).
53. See Hirschberg, p. 315.
54. See also Unterecker, p. 286, and Jeffares, Commentary, p. 501.
55. See also Jeffares, p. 501.
56. See also Jeffares, p. 502.

57. Quoted in Jeffares, p. 502.
58. See Ellmann, Identity, p. 204.
59. Ellmann, Identity, p. 204.
60. The 'nothingness' of the scarecrow image 'is emphasized by the mechanical coat-hanger' (Ellmann, p. 204).
61. See C. G. Jung, Psychological Reflections, p. 324.
62. See James Olney, 'W. B. Yeats's Daimonic Memory', Sewanee Review, 85 (1977), 583-603 (p. 586).
63. Olney, p. 586. (See note 62 above.)
64. 'The Apparitions' was composed in March and April 1938 (Jeffares, p. 501), 'The Man and the Echo' in July-October of the same year (Ellmann, p. 294).
65. Jung, Psychological Reflections, p. 320.

C O N C L U S I O N

It is true that Yeats's spiritualistic investigations during the 'interlude' did not provide him with the 'philosophy' he thought he was discovering, the profound doctrine he was seeking in 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places'. Neither his 'fat old medium' in Holloway or Soho, nor Mrs Wriedt's controls disclosed to him 'the secret of the ages' (IIWFT, 22). His encounters with mediums, 'controls', and 'spirit-visitors' stirred his imagination, but they did not 'answer all [his] doubts', the 'great question whether the soul be immortal or not' through 'demonstration and experiment'.¹ He questioned, 'though not always', the identity of the 'shades that communicated with him through mediums; at times his doubts were 'growing more faint', and yet they 'return[ed] again and again': Yeats the 'psychical researcher' continually reminded himself 'of some piece of evidence', but he could not feel certain that the 'shades' who spoke to him were 'the shades they profess[ed] to be' ('Leo Africanus', Appendix: B). Although, as he wrote to Leo, 'after years of investigation' he had 'accepted the most incredible facts', when death was approaching,

'the ageing man' had nothing but the 'mystery' and fright' of 'the increasing Night'.

Still, if nothing ever satisfied Yeats the 'psychical researcher' who had had 'a certificate of caution from a well-known American medium', Yeats as a poet and dramatist was enriched by his spiritualistic investigations, for they provided him with images, 'grotesque or beautiful' (IIWFT, 24), with symbols, metaphors, and motifs, which — to some extent — determined his literary tactics.

As I have argued here, despite a number of critics who either frowned upon or simply ignored Yeats's psychical interests, consideration of the 'interlude' is indispensable to the study of his mind and imagination, and to the study of his art. It may be that I have resorted to a few 'useful hypotheses'. Still, it goes without question that analysis of the 'interlude' clarifies some of Yeats's major literary strategies and procedures.² His unpublished records of seances and his other spiritualistic writings leave no room for doubt: his art was greatly affected by his 'strange' encounters with the 'other side'. Yeats was greatly indebted to such encounters for his seance-play, The Words upon the Window-pane, as well as for some of the celebrated poems he wrote during or after the 'interlude' — poems such as 'To a Shade', 'The Cold Heaven', 'The Magi', 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory', 'The Second Coming', or 'All

Souls' Night'. Indeed, he was able to transmute the 'truth' that came 'out of a medium's mouth' into poetic knowledge, for he acknowledged the metaphorical implications of his mediumistic encounters, and he often imitated trance-speaking in his 'apocalyptic' and 'prophetic' vision. Moreover, his significant encounter with 'Leo Africanus', his anti-self, his Mask and Daemon, objectified his efforts to 'remake' himself, to transcend opposites as a man and poet, for 'all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self', and 'all ... creative life is a re-birth as something not one-self'.³ Surely his ghosts 'educated' him.

N O T E S

1. See Chapter 2, p. 52 above.
2. See Introduction, p. 13 above.
3. See Chapter 6, p. 151 above, and Brenda S. Webster, Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study (London and Basingstoke), 1974, p. 236.

N O T E O N A P P E N D I C E S

As I explained in Chapter 1, among the papers that Senator Michael B. Yeats has classified as 'occult' there is a considerable body of material which bears upon the poet's psychical interests — material which is often indispensable to the study of Yeats's art.¹ But, given the scope of this thesis, as well as my limitations, I had to go through 'a tragedy of separation and rejection'. Although one of my aims in the Appendices is to imply the range of Yeats's spiritualistic and psychical interests, some of his records of seances are redundant in the present context. For example, the typescript entitled 'Fifth Seance at Madame Bisson's' has nothing to add to the 'Seances at Madame Bisson's' (Appendix A: 7), at least with regard to the literary relevance of the 'interlude'.² Moreover, a few manuscripts have defied my most desperate efforts to transcribe them.³

Jon Stallworthy has presented the difficulties of Yeats's handwriting, and I have nothing to add in this

¹As I have noted this material is now available on microfilm at the National Library of Ireland. But see also Bibliography below.

²See also Chapter 1, p. 32 above.

³I have described the contents of these records in Chapter 1.

connection. Indeed, Yeats's handwriting often 'travels the no man's land between longhand and shorthand'. Touching upon 'just a few ... eccentricities' of Yeats's handwriting, Stallworthy notes that:

a symbol like *o* can be a capital *I*, or *O* ... 'not' and 'but' are sometimes indistinguishable, as are also: 'then', 'there', 'their', 'the', 'this', 'these', 'those'; likewise: 'in', 'on', 'or', 'an'. The suffix *-ed* is often no more than an upward curve *↗*; *-ing* no more than a downward curve *↘*. A final *s* is frequently omitted or unrecognizable, so that the singular form of a noun cannot be distinguished from the plural.⁴

What is more, a symbol like *ʌ* can mean 'to', and a symbol like *7* can mean 'of' or 'by', 'Africa' can mean 'African', and 'African' can mean 'Africanus'.

It is true that 'anyone transcribing exactly what he saw on the page before him would ultimately be faced with gibberish', that 'a transcriber must accordingly at times exercise the licence of a translator'.⁵ But, as I believe that the accuracy of the transcriptions is of paramount importance, I have seldom exercised this licence. Unlike a translator, I have not 'corrected' Yeats's syntax, and I believe that I have never substituted a word for another.

Still, for all my efforts to give the reader an accurate picture of the writings I have transcribed, I

⁴Between the Lines: Yeats's Poetry in the Making (Oxford, 1963), p. 11.

⁵Stallworthy, p. 11.

had to adopt certain policies in order to limit editorial apparatus and, when possible, to avoid the use of sic. Thus, I have corrected misspellings of words and names, and I have occasionally corrected confusing errors in capitalization and punctuation. I have corrected fused sentences but I have seldom corrected comma splices, for I did not want to disrupt the rhythm of Yeats's 'thinking on paper'.⁶

In my transcriptions, a dash within square brackets [-] represents a word I cannot read, and a word deleted [~~when~~] a word cancelled. Likewise, a dash within square brackets represents one or more letters I cannot read, for example S[-], and letters deleted letters cancelled, for example whe[~~re~~]n. It follows that [~~=~~] represents a cancelled word I cannot read. Further editorial matter is within square brackets.

⁶See also Stallworthy, p. 10.

APPENDIX A: 1

Report of Seance¹

held at Cambridge House, Wimbledon

at 6.30 on May 9th, 1912

PRESENT besides Mrs Wriedt the medium, Mrs Harper, Miss Harper and eight others.

The room had a dark cabinet, but this was not used as the room was entirely darkened. A long tin trumpet was handed round. I did not notice at the beginning of the seance where it was finally placed, but noticed at the end that it was standing on its broad end in the middle of the room. The Medium had a strong American accent. When the room was darkened, a musical box started playing. After about three minutes or so, the box stopped. We were then suddenly sprinkled with some liquid. I felt this on my hands and face. The Medium when questioned said it was the way her control had of showing he was present and that it was a kind of baptism. A little later there came an exceedingly loud voice through the trumpet. I could not understand what was said. The Medium interpreted that it claimed to come for 'Mr Gates'. I said this was evidently me. It then said in a more distinct voice which I could follow and still very loud, that it had been with me from child-

¹At the top of the page, above the title of the text, the page is marked 'First appearance of Leo'.

hood. Shortly after it had begun speaking, a terrified woman got up and went out. It went on saying 'that they wanted to use my hand and brain'. I was little impatient. I had this kind of spirit once before, and was repelled by what I considered an appeal to my vanity. But for this I would have listened more carefully. The voice said something about my possessing the key or the key-mind they wanted. I asked who was speaking and was told that it was 'Leo, the writer and explorer'. ~~[I could not understand the answer]~~ I asked whe~~re~~n he lived. I got no answer. I could understand. I said ['] did you live in the 18th century? ['] Then came some sentence beginning with 'Why, man?' or some such phrase implying impatience, certainly containing the word 'man' and adding 'Leo, the writer, you know Leo, the writer.' When I said I knew no such person the voice said: 'As I thought, 'you will hear of me in Rome.' [Quotation marks as in the script. The quotation mark before 'As' seems to be deleted.]

The Medium had however heard the words as 'You will find me in the Encyclopaedia.' Both may have been said, but there were a number of sentences I could not follow. I noticed that 'Leo' had a strong Irish accent, whereas the Medium had a strong American accent. I had also the impression that the Irish accent was not quite true. The kind of accent an Irishman some years out of Ireland, or an Englishman who had a fair knowledge of Ireland, might assume in telling an Irish story.

One of the sitters, however, told me that she considered the accent like my own, and not stronger than mine. I had

thought it stronger. I asked the Medium the meaning of this Irish accent. She replied that the control had to get its means of expression from my mind. With a click, possibly the putting of the trumpet on the ground, the control finished. It was followed by a very low voice, very difficult to understand and from which little could be made out, except a Christian name, and the first letter of a surname. It had seemingly come for one of the other sitters. Suddenly this low voice was interrupted by the loud voice again telling me to sit up straight on my chair. I was leaning forward with my elbows on my knees. I consider this sentence as proof that there was no conscious jugglery on the part of the Medium, for the room was in entire darkness. No gleam of light, however faint, from under the door or through the keyhole, or from the crack of a shutter. And in all this part of the Seance there were I think two, certainly one, sitter between myself and the Medium. At this point the Seance practically ended, for two terrified ladies went out, which broke the influence, or at any rate brought all satisfactory manifestations to an end. We sat for nearly an hour longer, with no result except that I was touched twice towards the end of the hour upon the top of my head as if by the thumb and fore-finger of a hand, and that while I was doubting whether a faint gleam of light which seemed to come at intervals from where the Medium was — she was sitting next me since the last two went out — I saw at my right hand a light very distinctly and without any possibility of being mistaken straight in front of me. It was not bright; it was the usual phosphorescent glow and about the

size and shape of a six-penny loaf.

I set down here for my own guidance that I wish to observe whether there is any tendency at a Seance for a faint voice through a dramatising instinct [be] unconsciously to follow a loud one. Miss Harper looked up Leo in Lemprière and found these words: — 'An author of Pella[s] who wrote on the nature of Gods, et c.' Lemprière gives references, but unless one found that this Leo was also an explorer, there is very little to decide on.

Note — Not to look up the references till after next Seance as they might become a suggestion to the control.

It is possible that Leo may turn out to be a symbolic being. Leo, the constellation, the house of the sun, and if this is so, it would account for the arrogance implied by his impatience when I did not know his name, by the appeal to my vanity of his address. Further if it be true as I have already supposed, that the influence under which I do my work and think my most profound thoughts, is what an Astrologer calls solar, this being or state like the previous control which said to me very similar things some 12 years ago, may be a dramatization of a reality.

It is even possible that the domineering jocular type of half-Irish, or English-Irish storyteller, suggested to me not only by certain intonations of the voice but by such an expression as 'Why, man?' may be a lower solar form, [~~arrogance being always~~]² the perversion of the solar

²The reader should take notice of a correction in Yeats's hand: in the place of the deleted words the author seems to be writing something to the effect of 'mark[ing] a kind of [—] belonging to'.

power, speaking astrologically. I have never been quite certain that certain controls who give themselves names of great antiquity, do not really select by some process of unconscious affinity from the recorded or unrecorded memories of the world, a name and career that symbolizes their nature.

W. B. Y.

APPENDIX A: 2

Seance held at Cambridge House, Wimbledon

Medium Mrs [Wriedt]

June 5, 1912

Present [-] and the medium Dr A [braham] Wallace and W. B. Yeats.

When I arrived a little tired from having lost my way and come very quickly, I found the medium and Dr Wallace and Miss Harper and her mother at tea. During tea Mrs [Wriedt] called Mr Jefferson several times. Dr Wallace corrected him [the control] and said 'no, a poet and writes plays'. I spoke of a seance some year[s] ago with Williams when a materialized form, vaguely visible [in] the light of a phosphorescent slate (too vaguely visible I think [- - - - -]) declared that it was 'Leonora' my 'guide', or perhaps it was 'Eleonora'. I asked on the resemblance of the name; [it] is certain[ly derived] from Leo.

The seance room contained a cabinet which we did not use as it was a dark seance. Among chairs [there were] [- - -] table with flowers, trumpets et c.

[There follows a drawing showing the respective positions of medium, W. B. Yeats, Dr Wallace, cabinet, musical box, tables with flowers, and trumpets. See Plate 1.]

I would have liked [- -] to make a map [?] in some

detail but this was not possible. I think it would have been better it was a more empty room and to have known exactly what was contained before starting. Then things were of the least [?] importance as the realism of the manifestation excluded conscious juggling on the medium's part; there is always however the possibility of a more common thing, trance juggling perhaps, or the ['-'] of genuine manifestation. On that occasion the medium was certainly not entranced at all, in any ordinary sense of the word. The entrancing of a single arm, let us say, is always possible, [-] unknown to the medium. After the musical box had played a few minutes [it] stopped. Then came a sharp voice which seemed to rise from the floor, as though from one of the trumpets [- - - - -], saying that it was Henry Irving. Then the voice rose higher and went [-] lower again. It was speaking in blank verse, Shakespeare I think in the Irving manner, but all we could make out was 'all's well'. Then it ceased. A voice made [a sound] like a horn in the trumpet and then [we heard] a faint voice and 'Leo' began speaking almost at once [?], the faint voice to Dr Wallace, seeming within a trumpet, and Leo from a trumpet to me. Leo more or less repeated what he [had] said before: 'he had been with me from childhood' et c., and then said: 'Though a Spaniard I am not a villain. I am still a Spaniard' and 'I am lingering [?] to teach you to write plays in a scientific way'. He seemed to [-] of scepticism and was truculent as ever. I asked if I could help him, he resented, then said it was for him to help me. He said [-] 'You mistook me for a woman.'

light torch [?], a flower I think came on [-] just below [-] him [Dr Wallace?]. Then the manifestation ceased. [- - - -] I touched [?] the trumpet which stood on the ground once more. I found the narrow end full of violets, so full that there was some resistance as I drew out the stems.

[There follows a short note. As I cannot transcribe it in any satisfactory way, I shall give here a summary. In the note Yeats refers to his difficulty in remembering details and getting them down, and suggests that a stenographer is essential at every seance. From time to time the stenographer should be told what has happened. The note, signed 'W. B. Yeats' and dated June 6, is followed by a postscript.]

PS. I confirmed the impression [that] at my first seance [it] was Leo speaking like a stage Irishman. It was not a wrong accent but a certain up and down lilt of the voice. Henry Irving and the allusion made [-] Leo [-] by mistaking him for a woman and to his teaching me to write plays seem to me suggestions from the conversation at ten. The seance was not the less interesting [?] to me because I saw something in it incompatible with its form being a dream's fabrication of the subliminal consciousness of myself and the medium. What was believed in form [?] even on that theory has yet to be investigated. After the voice of the woman spoke to me there was a light at a spot in front of the medium for a time, a small round light.

WBY,

June 6

The medium said, when I said that the woman with the ring is a living woman, that she must at this moment be thinking of me.

APPENDIX A: 3

Seance with Peters

26 October, 1912

Peters is a very nervous little man who is never still for a moment. He has a way of swaying on his feet backwards and forwards. He looks a religious enthusiast of the sort that preaches in Hyde Park. It was a large circle, fifteen or twenty people, who, including myself, put various objects on a tray for him to [-] finding their original owners et c. The first object he took up was a bunch of keys, he rejected these saying that keys were no use, the next object he selected was a little bottle which I couldn't see very well in the dim light, he found himself in a far away warm country, probably in the south, and amongst small finely built people with long faces and thick dark hair, and small hands and feet. He then described a man who was not recognised and thought he saw palms. The owner of the bottle, said it had come from Rome or Pompei, probably from Pompei. Peters said, 'Yes, Pompei', that is why I felt burning heat not like the heat of the sun.' He had not spoken of this burning heat before but evidently thought he had. This test had no value as there was nothing that an oriental bottle might not have suggested. He then took a piece of paper with a signature on it and gave what professed to be, a description of the writer of the signature. There were no facts except something rather vague about a voyage, there

were many characteristics of so general a kind that they would have fitted a number of people. I was not impressed by a sitter's recognition of this person described. He then took a seal from the tray and after some very general description, described three people very minutely, including the last illness of one (pain in chest, struggle for breath), all three descriptions were recognised. Then without taking up anything from tray, he pointed to an old grey-haired man in the corner of the room, and said that an old lady was standing near him; he described this old lady, but the description was not recognised, he then said that the old gentleman was a Quaker, which was correct, and the old lady's name was Deborah, this seemed to bring her to the sitter's mind, for he said now, that he recognised her. Peters then said 'I get the name "Webb", is that her surname?' It was not, but it was the old gentleman's own name. Peters also told him that he had been at seances before, this was true, but these seances have been in Dublin and he and Peters never met before. He then took up an old-fashioned ring and gave a very minute description of a man and a woman dressed as he said 'in the clothes of a past generation'. The owner of the ring did not recognise them, but said that many people had owned it for it was very old. He then took up an old silver watch, and said that it gave him a feeling of great sadness, the owner's life had been tragic, there had been great happiness and then a tragic event, its owner had been a disciplinarian with a command over men and at this had been very successful, he described

his appearance minutely, he said there had been an accident of a fall or a blow, he got a sensation of the owner lying on the ground and feeling, 'this is death and I can't do anything to prevent it'. There was also something about a ship. The owner of the watch said it had belonged to a certain notable, and successful missionary, who had been especially successful, in his management of men, this missionary had been very happy for a time and then his wife and child had died some months after this, he was found frozen to death in the snow, he had been about to sail for home. Then came a second description of the owner of the watch. This time it was an old lady, she was described in rather general terms, and not decisively recognised, then the sitter became more certain, and now the description became minute and was seemingly accurate, for the sitter kept nodding her head in approval, then Peters said, there was somebody connected with her called 'Mary', the sitter did not remember, presently Peters said, 'yes, and there was something about a ring'. The sitter remembered now, the old lady had had a servant called Mary and inherited from her a ring which she always wore, 'there was also', said Peters, 'something about a cup of tea, it was always brought to her room, was it brought at four in the afternoon?' 'No', said the sitter, 'it was brought at 11 in the morning, and then went on suddenly remembering, and she drank a cup of tea ten minutes before she died. [Quotation marks as in the typescript.] He then took up a signet ring, and the sitter said it was her fathers' [sic]. Peters reproved her for

saying that and began a fairly minute description, which was not recognised for some time and not I think then very decisively. Then Peters got a message, sitter was worried about something but it would come all right if she made no effort. This was recognised to be correct at once. Then Peters took up a piece of stone, it brought him, he said, into the distant past, to a great plain with hills near, a deserted place where there was no human power, there was water near, it was part of a rain [?] and there were great blocks of unmortared stone; the owner — who was the old gentleman called Webb — said 'absolutely true'. 'The ground has risen', Peters went on, 'there is a stone floor under the earth, a square room, larger than the seance room, an awe inspiring a religious place, there had been a tragedy near the spot, a battle or killing and since then the place had been deserted, there had once been a circle of trees, oak trees he believed for 'he had tasted the bitterness of acorns'. [Quotation marks as in the typescript.] It proved to be a stone from the pyramid of Cheops. He described in connection with it — before we were told what it was — a man with long hair, brown jacket of some sort, leather on his legs, and some kind of shoes, not sandals, who had tried to communicate with sitter. When he had finished with the stone, he described someone who he said was a relation of Mr Webbs whose Christian name would be William and who had known Deborah, the portrait was very minute but was not recognised, he then said, William had been a school-master and one of the elders at the Meeting house Webb used

to go to when child, he sat on the second seat to the left, gave a minute description of the place which I could not quite follow, after attending it Webb had gone to a Meeting house in the country, Webb seemed to recognise the circumstances but not William. He then took up a medal but got nothing distinctly, he said there were two people but all was confused, and that was a souvenir, this was correct. The last object he took up was a ring, and he said 'what a curious life you have had and will have' and gave a rather general description, and then described an old lady who had pain in the legs. The sitter said she thought she recognised, but by this time he was getting tired, he did not take up the object I had put on the tray.

I kept a note-book on my knees during the seance and jotted down the essential facts, I have sometimes put the facts in a more coherent order than they are in my note-book and expanded words into sentences, but I have a warrant for everything in my notes. Peters did not seem at his ease, he was irascible, and more restless than he seemed to-day, there was something wrong with the influence, I asked if it was the weather - it was pouring rain and a very damp feeling in the air. He said, no, but there wasn't enough air, the window should have been opened. Afterwards however I heard him attribute his discomfort to the damp; dry, frosty weather was much better.

NOTE

Peter's host, a certain Irish poet called Cousens, a good

fellow but not a good poet, his friends consider him very vain. He told me that his wife — who is an automatic writer — got lately some Script from an influence which professed never to have lived upon the earth, to be much higher than a man, and to be in command of millions of spirits, it had come to get Cousens to write certain poems in interpretation of old Irish mythology, it was necessary that the interpretation should be given currency in the world, and I must add that he reported the spiritist saying 'it does not matter whether the poems are good or bad, the interpretations will be made current'. The spirit also gave two myths, which it declared were old myths which are now lost about certain Celtic gods, he asked the spirit for his name, it wrote 'Ezra called also Salathiel'. He had never heard this name. Some time afterwards he bought a copy of the Apocgrapha [Apocrypha] which he said he had never seen, and found 'Ezra called Salathiel', and that the person of this name had revived for the Jews their Law which had been lost. Cousens also describes himself as walking one day by the edge of the sea on a perfectly still day and asking in his mind the old Irish sea god Mannahann to help him in something he was writing. He was suddenly drenched with sea water as if from a wave, though no wave was possible, and when he went indoors wrote a great number of lines about Manahhan [sic] with extraordinary rapidity. He impresses as accurate and truthful, but I do not know him very well.

APPENDIX A: 4

Second Seance [with] Peters

October 27, 1912

Had a half hours seance with Peters alone. I asked him if he could get my 'guides'. The only thing I told him was that a voice which professed to be the voice of one of them, came to me at Cambridge House and said that I had seven. He then began a description which I did not recognise for some time, unfortunately he was almost through this description before I remembered to take notes. He described a man who is a lyric poet, and a musician though he knew nothing about music, also a painter, he said, for he got colour. The form held out to him something that was like a balance sheet, only it was not a balance sheet, and there was a picture on this sheet, this man he declared had lived a tragic life without recognition, but was for all that a most joyous influence, he was better known since his death, he had written prose as well as verse, but the prose though logical, had been unintelligible, he was most excitable, thinking and speaking rapidly, unable to express all he had to say. When he was about half through with this description, I saw that it could be nobody but William Blake, I gave him no clue. This man, he said, had had no dramatic talent, purely lyrical, he had influenced my early life, but was in the background now, he could come forward again. When I questioned him afterwards he assured me he knew nothing of Blake, except what he got from the reading many years ago of some of his

poems, in the Canterbury poets. I noted particularly, his insistence on the excitability of the man as if this had been a cause of his practical failure, it would have needed a deeper knowledge of his life than could be got from any book of selection to have known how true this was. I doubt if an ordinary reader of Gilchrist's Life of Blake would have discovered it, and I am sure that it would not have been the fact which would have most impressed a man of Peters' type. He then went on to describe two other personalities, who were he said introduced by the first, he contrasted the first with Blake — if Blake it was, who was he said very clean, this was probably true in spite of one statement of a contemporary to the contrary, I've a vague memory of Ellis once meeting somebody who knew Blake when a child and said, he was a dirty old man, but Ellis got the impression that it was the poverty of the room which really had impressed the child. This second personality was in contrast by being dirty with untidy clothes, unkempt [uncombed?] longish hair, he could not see much but the face, he saw only a bust, the man was not very tall, had a longish face and curious half dead eyes and a rough beard, then the face began to alter, it grew thin, it looked unhealthy, not though but disease [sic], maybe with drink, though it was not red, it was something like that, the man showed a dead rose and laughed, he had had power over beautiful thoughts with sadness at the back of them, he made a beauty but it was not a beauty for women and children, he was very sad when he died and that was not more than one or two generations ago and he was more an influence than

a 'guide' and was not very close to me, he is known in the world. I did not recognise this. The third was a better spirit, a Frenchman, singing like a bird, perfectly free and happy, yet a sadness right through that echoes itself in me, a slight man with an oval face and fair eyes and a straight nose and little beard and a little moustache and a tight jacket and tight trousers, trunk hose he said, and long boots. He had some sort of a musical instrument like a guitar. He died hundreds of years ago and had lived in a medieval city, he had a gift of lyric expression and sang much. He used to sing of women and wine, and was more appreciated now than when he lived, he was known in France, the medieval city he had lived in was Paris, he had tried to get to me before. I did not recognise him, though half a dozen possible names occurred to me. Indeed I recognise all these three personalities as representing states of mind which have influenced my poetry or my criticism. Peters now got tired as it seemed, we talked of general things for some minutes, I told him that he had described Blake and that I had written a big book on Blake and that the personality of Cambridge House was not among those he described. He went into a trance unexpectedly and his guide Moonstone began to speak through him. He knew the personality I wanted but he was masterful, would have his own way, (quite the Cambridge House impression) had taken no offence that morning at something or other and would not come, but would come if I would have a private seance of an hour with Peters, a trance seance, at least Moonstone would try and bring him. Then the control went on to talk about my character and I think accurately,

and spoke of my past accurately though the particular fact mentioned could have been found out by Peters if he had made enquiries in Dublin which I don't believe he did, and made a prophecy for my future which had been made twice lately to me in London, he could not have known this.

WBY

APPENDIX A: 5

3rd Seance with Peters

October 27th, 1912

As before we put various objects on a tray. I put a letter from a dead relation. There were 8 or 9 people present including Madame Gonne. Peters took up the various objects on the tray one by one and felt them over as if deciding which he should begin with, he however put them all down and said, 'no, I see somebody for that lady there', pointing to Madame Gonne, 'a man who died when about 65, the top of his head is bald, the hair at each side grey, he has a commanding manner, is accustomed to command men, is impatient, a little of a domestic tyrant, you and he had opposite opinions.' I turned to Madame Gonne, and said 'was he your father', she said, 'no'. Peters overheard and insisted that she must be able to recognise this man, he was military, she said, 'yes, my father was in the army'. Peters went on, 'he was conservative, found his opinions in the 'Times' newspaper'; she again denied the resemblance, then Peters got up and said, 'he was lame', and as he said it touched a spot on his hip and walked across the room with a slight limp. Maud Gonne said at once, 'Yes, that is my father, that is just the way he limped when he was tired, and you have touched the spot upon your hip where he was shot, he hated to be seen limp[ing] and it was only when he was tired that he did it', but her father was not a conservative,

was not out of sympathy with her and was not more than fifty and looked younger than his age, but she had an uncle who answered the description and who was [about] 65 or older when he died. Peters said, 'Yes, I think I have got two people mixed.' There were other things in the description, such as he was fond of animals, had a large dog, and something about a particular horse, and other things also, but I could not take my notes rapidly enough. He then took up my envelope and said he got a man who had quick thoughts and was in the midst of anxiety before he died, and wondered what was going to happen next, a man who had not been wholly appreciated and who knew he was going to die (this was certainly not my uncle and so far I did not recognise the description). He then went on, 'he was somewhat reserved, and he has been very anxious to get back, his work was unfinished, he used to have some doubts as to whether we survived death' (I suddenly recognised John Synge but said nothing); he went on, 'he is here, he wants to say that we do survive death, that your dreams are even truer than you think, he wanted to set up a continuous communication. You will get confirmation through another medium, I find it difficult, you bring such crowds of people with you. Are the initials "J. S." or "J. S. S.?"' I told him that J. S. was correct. Later on in the evening, in the middle of quite a different description, Peters turned to me and said, 'was the Christian name John' and I said it was [and] he went on, 'I asked you that for the sake of the spirit, he wanted to be sure he was identified, he is easier in

his mind now'. I should have said that he asked if Synge died of lung trouble, this was not true, Synge died of cancer in the stomach. He asked me to find out if there had been difficulty in the breathing. He then took up a wedding ring, put on the tray by a woman who was present, gave a minute description of her dead husband, spoke of his finding difficulty in expression [when he died] and said that on Friday night, she had asked herself if it were possible that dead could return and prayed that he might do so, she had a portrait of him in a round frame and he told her to put a red rose in front of this portrait. The owner of the ring said all these facts were true and that there was a red rose in their conservatory of which her husband was exceedingly fond. Peters then gave a minute description of a woman who was not connected with the ring, this description was also recognised. The next object he took up was a letter from a living person, gave a description which was recognised - but it was in rather general terms; he said that the writer of the letter owing to some change in her life was going to take up the study of French or some other Latin language. The sitter did not know if this was true. The next object was a piece of iron; he gave the description of a barren place somewhere away from Dublin, heather, broken ground, some trees, water, a man of confused impressions, he kept saying it was like broken cinematograph films, impressions of some far past time, but nothing was decisively recognised, it turned out to be a piece of iron from a Roman quarry in Yorkshire [- - - -]. The next was a letter, he gave a rather general description of character

and then a minute description of the death conditions. Both descriptions were recognised but not at first and not decisively. He said that the sitter had been in much hesitation as to whether it was right to communicate with the dead and that he was affected by this and found it hard to express himself; he seemed puzzled and wanted to know if the writer of the letter had been dumb or partly dumb before death. I have no record of the answer, the whole thing was in some way confusing, the sitter had arrived late, necessarily therefore somewhat disturbing the conditions and I had been aware in myself of a strong hostility towards her on this account, the medium may have been affected in the same way. He then took up a magnifying glass and described the sitter who had placed it on the tray and his circumstances; both were recognised though not decisively, there was nothing very striking. The medium seemed tired and stopped for a time and talked of things in general; the seance seemed at an end. When the medium's voice changed he was controlled by Moonstone, who [-] addressing Maud Gonne, he saw a crowd round her, what a busy life she had had, she had been a whirlwind and had lived in a whirlwind, and had great power over men and women, as much over one as over the other, but lived now in retirement, she had met with a lot of ingratitude, let them plough for themselves, she thought now, she had done much speaking or was it acting on the stage? I said 'speaking'. He went on, 'crowds of people, but all in the past, though the old fire was still there, a lot of green and she had made play with it, shamrocks on a

flag, but all that was past now, she had met with disillusionment, idealism had gone, and there were facts now, a deeper foundation. You think that you are going to stay retired, but no, there is another cause dear to her heart; very soon she would take up that new work, though she did not think she was going to do it, but let her wait, it was not to be yet, but next year. She had been to America, from city to city and then had gone east, had gone over Europe, had met famous people with very foolish ideas, and then she changed, she had changed her life, had done it decisively', and then he said, 'there is a man you have worked with, who is he? He is about as tall as the medium, his age was about 50, he had a voice that moved people, he was pale like marble, but there was colour under the paleness, he had eyes that burnt, burned inwardly'. Then came a detailed description of the conditions of death but much of this I missed in my notes, partly in vain¹ trying to identify the man but I remember this phrase: 'he died like a candle blown out — there was a red wick'.² Suddenly the medium went down on the floor and sat cross-legged with a queer chattering laugh; had it been acting, it would have been excellent acting, it was as though one had an old Oriental with a touch of the monkey in front of one. He

¹ Note that 'in' ('in vain') is deleted, and some other word or words is/are put in its place. Unfortunately, I cannot make out what is written there.

² But I remember ... red wick': this is added in Yeats's hand. Please remember my comment on Peters' poetic style in Chapter 1.

went on, 'There was money trouble after his death, something that was done wrong about house property, about an old house in the country, his mother had to do with it, he had been the second of his name in the public life of this country'. [And] then, because [we] he had not been recognised as it seemed, the old Indian said, 'he is showing a picture of a round-faced man with an eye-glass, and now he has made a picture of a pig and he laughs, and he says, "you will know who I am if you will think of a pig who shot himself, of an eye-glass"', and then repeating, as if he loved the joke, 'of a pig that shot himself'. He then went back to his ancestor[~~s~~], who was in the Church, and then told Maude Gonne that she was going to work again, and for her own sex, and he said, 'Ah, what a fire you would make, and you are going to do it'. He spoke of the [- -]. They have received the old [- -] but on this side have decided what is to [-]. Then Moonstone spoke for himself, and told Madame Gonne that she lived in Paris and had been miserable there (but she would no more admit that she had been miserable thus her father would show his [- - - - -]), but that was true enough, [~~but~~] she is too proud to admit that [~~circumstances~~] events could so affect her). Then Moonstone spoke to another sitter, who had, he said, 'a strange dream life and a bad physical life, but my notes which were made in the midst of Moonstone's rapid speech are not here legible. He told the sitter of certain meditations which he had had and said he had them the night before; the most definite part was, that the sitter had thought of heredity

and wondered if his children after him would be cursed as he had been, the sitter ~~[said]~~ would not admit that this was true, though the rest was and he had ~~[-----]~~ been [?] in meditation that night. Moonstone then said, 'you had to turn out of your last place', the sitter said, 'yes', and then came a description of a spirit which was not recognised and a prophecy of a change in two years. I could not gather anything very decisively. The sitter was a protege of one of the Dublin spiritualists, a fishmonger with a dark Italian looking face, and was I think timid in his new company. I spoke to him afterwards and he seemed very much impressed. ~~[He may have felt as a country girl told me her mother did (and very uncomfortable my mother was when she heard the truth coming out [when?] a witch had come into the [-])].~~ Now Moonstone made a sort of farewell address. He went into the past by reading what we had in our auras, but sometimes the records was [sic] very dim, if we thought clearly the record was clear, it was easy to read ~~[to]~~ the [?] educated and sympathetic people, but with those who were educated and not sympathetic the records were like stone, it was necessary for us to tune the medium to ourselves, the speaker - though a spirit - was a medium for other spirits, they sent to us images. The speaker was one of the original congress in the spirit world that had decided to break down the barrier, they had tried many times and some that [?] had spoken through had been burnt, and some had been put into asylums, and some had mistaken them for angels of the Virgin Mary and that was no use at all. They had been

advised - and I understood the spirit to say - it was the spirit of Benjamin Franklin who advised them - to use raps, we were not to suppose they made the raps with their knuckles, Moonstone made some comparison with electricity and said [they] raps were [very] easy [---].

APPENDIX A: 6

Peters' Seance

October 30th, 1912

3 p.m.

I had a sitting alone with Peters and have rather full notes but cannot trust my memory for little expansions of notes I make when I write them out next day. Through illness I had to postpone my notes until today (21st November). On my way to Peters, I lunched with Madame Gonne and got into an argument of a semi-political sort which rather spoilt the passivity that seems necessary to get the best possible results. I arrived feeling a little indignant and Peters began at once by saying, that I brought with me too much power, too much creative force, that everything was stirred up, that he saw it as dark yellow. He then went on to say, that I was not naturally a fighter, and something about my calling into power new forces in myself, managing and organising for others, for there was another spirit force outside me that called this up, a man who had passed over not long ago, medium height, rather broad, pale face, a broad forehead, a little bald, face fairly long, full lips, a little beard, long fine hands, power of irritability, touchiness and roughness, much movement, walks backwards and forwards with his hands behind him, wears glasses, he lived out of his own country, he had great influence direct and indirect, he wrote what caused much dust, had had disturbed but not

constructed, an impersonal, not a personal influence, his influence will not be lasting, had tried to get back before for his work was incomplete, an old fashioned coat, his influence was still on to-day, he gave me melancholy, he had the sort of coat my father might have worn, and there was something about the brushing of his clothes, had something to do with the theatre but it was indefinite, was never in the theatre except as a spectator, he was not Irish and had nothing to do with Ireland, I had never met him, he had to do with Germany, yet he was not a German. Then the medium's voice changed, Moonstone was in control, said something about this last man, reflecting his mood into me and making me doubt the permanent value of my own work; then said he had something to say for Madame. The man who he identified the other day as Parnell was still hanging about, he had made a mess of his life, he wanted to explain about the symbol of the three dogs, the red dog was hatred against his nation, the black dog was the worst, indifference within, the white dog was hypocrisy of two sections of the Christian church (Moonstone speaks as a pagan), he fought all, slipped on ladder, all the dogs were at him, all he tried for has been realised but one thing, not direct legislation, but indirect legislation for improvement of people. The people he had worked for had not been known as a people, they were a crowd, that is all. He had worked for the country people, their tradition and their rights, their ideal was real gradually that had come about, not of much consequence, he then say [sic] 'white dog of hypocrisy and he laugh, [sic] he laugh so much'. Moonstone then said he saw the man who

showed the dead rose, this man was Irish, clever but unlucky, had the credit of being a drunkard, he did good, but not great work, it was fragmentary, he took opium too, he did a little in the newspapers, 'how these people come round you, you were the one man who speaks their thought, you have their fire and yet the literary training of a Germanic people, others had too much of one or the other, they say that you experiment much before you do anything "great", enthusiasm for Celtic expression has cooled with reason, I wish to get beyond Ireland, Ireland can't be made great by local effort. They want me to let myself go to them, many of them round me, temporary influences; a man amongst them who is enthusiastic for his national work'. Then I find in my notes, the words, 'very old' but this must be a slip. Moonstone must have said, 'not very old'. Moonstone went on: -'Theatre writer, medium height, rather round face, eyes brown, hair ragged, not big in body, quiet and active at his production, great power of expression, he died a disappointed man, since he became a spirit he is more appreciated, sickness, feels a desire to vomit ['], I was his friend, gave him money help, (I said 'no'), he thanks me for large paper. I asked why he put on the death condition when he came to communicate. Moonstone said 'his illness was acute and comes back to him every time he returns, but every time the vibration of old conditions grow less, he gets away from them. I then began to question Moonstone, I asked him if he remembered where he had been an hour ago, he said not very well, he had to forget it when he controlled the medium, he then said something which I understood to

mean, that when he first controlled [the] medium, he was in a dreaming state because he was not in the body but in its magnetic condition, he had to separate the medium's personality from what he himself had to tell, he had to make the medium's brain, answer his thought as it were a fiddle, and it was a dreaming, not a thinking brain. He said something which I don't quite recall and my notes are not clear at this point about being able to express himself better the closer he got to me. I tried to find out in what form the summons to come to the medium's help reached him, he said ~~[=]~~ 'we not separate [sic] for long, distance is nothing, nothing can really separate us'. I said 'Is your world ~~[=]~~ very unlike ours?'; he said, that the first sphere was a replica of our world but more sublime, he then corrected himself, and said, 'not that, but more refined.' He said that the first sphere is a reflection of our world, because it is in part the outcome of our world, the psychic undercurrent of our world. I gather for all that that their world was very different and I asked how it was that the dead sometimes did not know they were dead, he said that they did not know they were dead because they had never really left our world, I asked why, at seances, plants and the like, had been brought from a distance, one brought for the mediumship of Madame Desperance supposed to have come from Asia to London, but that no plant peculiar to their world alone had ever been brought. He said, that the spirit world was a reflection of ours, but with higher vibration, our eyes could not receive this vibration, we go to that world in dreams, he would die if he lived long

in our world — at least so I understand my notes. In the first sphere there are many sub-divisions according to the different affinities of spirits, he emphasised these antagonisms of affinity as peculiar to it, the second sphere is a reflection from the first and there it did not matter if you are Greek or African, speech there was not necessary, all was one, all was harmony, but how was he to express what we knew nothing about? Yet, it was not all reflection, for there was ascending and descending power, the descending power came to us through the first sphere, [you] he made me draw a hexagram [sic] to explain this. He then said that another of my guides had come, a man who passed away some years ago, he was surrounded with colour, architectural designs and poetry, he had been a Ruler, a Reformer, and yet conservative; fairly tall with a heavy face, old when he died, dark eyes, a longish nose, full lips, long hands, a tired man before he died he [Moonstone] saw red colour, red costume over white, pure white, an artist all round, a reformer in a big world that was yet a little world, he [the man] shows a cross, but this cross seemed to be held up like a letter X — a Greek cross — his country was warmer than this, he was a writer, but his writing [was] would have been of more value had his position been different, he spoke two languages, a city where there were many churches all one big church, he lived not a long time ago and yet not recently.

APPENDIX A: 7

Seances at Madame Bisson's

[May 1914]

(extracts)

My first three Seances at Madame Bisson's were failures, although a small luminous spot over left breast appeared at one. I do not describe them in detail, as with the one exception, of which Feilding¹ has taken notes, nothing happened. I observed at one during which I took notes, that the medium had a series of violent crises with intermediate periods of calm. This has been more or less true of all her seances which I have since seen. It is evidently a painful and exhausting thing for the medium, and I understand that the seance sometimes fails because the medium has shrunk from the pain and exhaustion. The hands and the body are frequently convulsed, and on Tuesday night last, I heard a woman who sat behind me say: 'Madame Bisson says the medium suffers as if it were childbirth'. One moment I was deeply moved. The medium cried out to Madame Bisson again and again as if in great pain. I am told, however, when the seance is over, she remembers nothing that has happened. [...]

[In the following extracts Yeats refers to his fourth seance at Madame Bisson's, which took place on Tuesday night,

¹Everard Feilding, Yeats's friend. See Chapter 2 above.

May 19, 1914. Before his account of what happened that night, he describes the environment and the medium's garments. Both are examined to exclude possibility of fraud.]

I wrote the following account of what happened, the morning after the seance from notes taken on the spot. Medium entered the cabinet about two minutes past nine by my watch. There was at once heavy breathing. The main light was put out. Madame Bisson took the hands of the medium. A late comer arrived and the medium seemed to awake. The medium began to show signs of distress. Her breath came heavily and there were short cries. At 9.10, Madame Bisson was still holding the medium's hands. At 9.20, she allowed the hands to rest upon the medium's knees. They began to work convulsively. I watched them steadily. At 9.35, nothing had happened. The hands had not been out of my sight. A moment later, there were convulsive movements and cries, and after that came one of those convulsive crises which follow one another in waves. Later there came more sounds, and a sound like retching. The crisis was over and the hands rested quietly. I noticed that in most of these spasms, the medium calls Madame Bisson by name - 'Oh Juliette!' again and again. Then more convulsive movements and Madame Bisson says: 'The phenomena has [sic] commenced.' The medium also is convinced that it has [they have] come. But when the curtain is parted, there is nothing. Then comes another crisis and the retching sound again, and when the curtain is parted, there is a small, luminous spot on left breast. Then one sees on the medium's lap, between the

fingers of the one hand and those of the other, a luminous thread about three inches long. And a moment later, this has given place to two parallel threads rather more than a quarter of an inch apart, slightly shorter than the single thread and joining a different part of the fingers. These glimpses are so brief and the change so quick, and the observation of the hand so as to know what parts of the fingers are joined by the thread, and the observation of the thread itself, is so difficult, that one's impression is blotted out by another. I find also that the strained watch on movement of the hands makes observation of the phenomena difficult; my attention is alternatively tired and startled. I forget some necessary note. I have no record of the exact moment of this phenomena [sic]. The curtains were let fall again and after another crisis, they were parted and I saw a luminous mass about the size of a breakfast plate, but irregular in shape, on the left breast of the medium. It seemed to pass from the chin to the left breast. For some reason, the curtains were let fall again, but only for a second. And when they were opened, the luminous mask had vanished. The medium's feet were now placed on Madame Bisson's knee. I had not lost sight of the hands. The curtain was drawn aside and there was the same phenomena [sic] as before, but now the white mass was larger [...]. This large mass vanished as suddenly as the other. The curtains were closed; when again opened, there was a great oval mass which seemed to hang down over the breast to the waist. I thought there was form in this mass, but was not sure. Madame Bisson said afterwards, that

it was her mother's face. Baron Schrenck held the red electric lamp close to it. I saw less well. The medium gave a cry at once. (My recollection is that she turned her head aside to hide from [?] the light.) The curtain was closed and in a second opened and the luminous mass had gone. It had the shape of a shield. The seance closed at 10.35. I had never lost sight of the hands. There was a slight damp on the [medium's] outer garment over breast, but none, I think, on the inner garment. Thinking over things to-day, I feel it is impossible to be sure whether the mass over the breast was self-luminous or only seemed so. I feel more confident of the luminosity of the threads which were perfectly straight as if stretched. I wonder if Baron Schrenck's presence caused the manifestation to take this form. He speaks a good deal of [-] Tomesk with whom Dr Ochcowich² [sic] has noticed these threads. One does not know the [-] of the [-] plastic power.

W. B. Yeats

²Ochorowicz (1850-1918) was co-director of the Institut General Psychologique of Paris.

APPENDIX A: 8

[Record of Seance]¹

Friday Evening the 7th May, about 8.30, 1915

[Present] Mrs Travers Smith and Lennox Robinson sitting blindfold. Rev. Savell Hicks recording.

The control Peter Rooney came at once. After a little conversation it was remarked that there seemed to be little psychic force. Peter Rooney said 'She is awfully depressed'.

He was then asked about the Lusitania, he said he would not talk of it, he thought 47 (or it may have been 470, the message was blurred) were drowned. Then was spelled out;

Pray for Hugh Lane.

Why?

He is drowned.

Who is speaking?

I am Hugh Lane.

Can you give us any evidence of identity?

She made a great impression on me by her playing.

(Correct)²

Where?

In her own house. (Correct)

When?

¹Untitled typescript.

²From this point on, comments in brackets are in Yeats's hand.

In December. (Correct) I never heard her before. (Not sure if this is correct.)

Where did you live?

In Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

Who else lived there, a celebrated man?

Carlyle.

Tell us what happened when Lusitania sank.

Panic.

Tell us exactly what occurred.

I heard shouts and ran up on deck. Boats were being lowered, women went first, I leaped in to one, it was too full, I was thrown into the sea. All is dark.

Did the submarine give warning?

Yes, about seven minutes.

How many were there?

Two. (He may have meant two torpedoes.)

All your friends will be very sorry.

A peaceful end to an exciting life.

Have you any particular message for anyone?

Hester must not tell Ellie tonight. (Ellie D[-].)

Is she to tell her later?

She will hear.

Is she to tell her about this communication?

Yes. Tell Hester she must work up that fine art of making music pictures.

Can you see who was at the board beside Hester?

Lennox Robinson. I do not know who you are.

I am Savell Hicks.

I know you preached on Wagner. I laughed with Ellie

when I saw your boards at Westland Row.

What was the number of your cabin?

Cabin 52.

Sure?

Yes.

Do you know the number drowned?

470.

Can you give the names of any of the passengers?

I had a man at my side called Kenneth Dowson, relative of the poet Ernest Dowson.

Was he drowned?

Don't know.

Can you tell us any other names?

I can't see them.

What attracted you here?

I saw a light, it was like a star on her head.

Will you communicate again?³

I will if I can but I do not know what is before one.

Have you any other special messages for anyone in particul[ar]?

The only one is Jim [-]. He and I were like brothers.

Tell him I shall wait till his face appears at the gate. Goodbye my two artist mediums, goodbye.

³This question and the subsequent answer are added in Yeats's hand.

APPENDIX A: 9

Seance with Mrs Harris

July 8, 1915

I was at a general seance given by Mrs Harris last night. I was at one seance there about six weeks ago and was not impressed. I had not given my name and the controls fished a great deal, and because I came with Dr Abraham Wallace, I suppose, they got into their heads that I was a Scotch, talked of Dr Wallace having met me in Edinburgh and so on. Last night there were about fifteen people present including Sir Alfred Turner and four ladies who made his party. He was on the left of the medium and I about three off on her right. I had gone there as I did not want to be compelled to hold a very large and fat hand as I did last time, a form of control of which I have no belief. She had a dark dress and did not look quite as like [] on Beardsley's fat woman. I had on my right hand a woman from Switzerland and beyond her sat some sort of non-conformist [] preacher who very needlessly appeared to me in the light of a confederate for some minutes, owing to his politeness in seeing that everybody had chairs. The medium was very late — she had been waiting for Alfred Turner — and was in a bad temper so I expected but little results. There was the usual darkness and the non-conformist lay brother sang a series of hymns in a thunderous voice, occasionally remonstrating that the other sitters did not

join in. Two trumpets had been placed in the middle of the circle, and presently we heard another voice — that of a control trying apparently to outsing the ~~[]~~ preacher. A little later, Harmony, the child control of Mrs Harris took possession, and began to direct the seance. Voices came abundantly going round the reverse way of the clock. The controls came to me very soon — once more they insisted I was Scotch in spite of the fact that I remember Dr Wallace telling them that I was not. A vague association between me and Wallace no doubt persisted. However, they discovered that I was a poet (I had not given my name) and described Robert Burns as hovering somewhere in the neighbourhood. A little later the spirit voice called me by my Christian name and Harmony said it was my mother, and that the spirits wished me to give an hour every week to solitary meditation, in which they would endeavour to reach me. Then the controls moved on getting nothing from the woman next me, but producing Sankey himself for the ~~[]~~ preacher who became very excited. He asked if Sankey did not inspire him when he sang and Sankey accepted the suggestion. The controls moved on — one or two seemed to be recognised. And then suddenly, we had what appeared to be an eruption from the subconscious of Sir Alfred Turner. We heard the voices (to the great indignation of the preacher who wanted to complete his conversation with Sankey) of Cromwell, Lord Roberts, General Grierson, Queen Victoria and Edward VII, and finally of someone who called himself King George. I suggested that he must be one of the Georges who were dead, but somebody said, 'oh

no, he is our George', and if Sir Alfred Turner had not interrupted, I have very little doubt he would have claimed to be the lying sovereign to the confusion of the spiritualists' more deliberated moments. One woman tried to argue with Cromwell for having taken off 'the head of Charles II' and Sir Alfred Turner wanted to hear what Robert[s] thought of the Kaiser now and reminded him of a visit they had both paid to the German ambassador. I was reminded of the figures that one used to make on a sheet when I was a child by standing between the candle and a sheet. Only now, I was the audience and could not tell what made the figures so vast and so shapeless. I noticed that the spiritualists who thought they believed themselves in the presence of two royalties did not really believe it ~~[-]~~ for they treated them with no more ceremony than they treated the other controls, and the ~~[-]~~ preacher did not cease to cry out for Sankey. Presently Sir Alfred Turner discovered other celebrities - Lawrence Irving and his wife, Cardinal Newman, Stead, and doubtfully rejected Gladstone. He is monopolising the seance said the ~~[-]~~ preacher, and was reproved by Harmony. Then suddenly the distorted ~~[-]~~ figures went and a voice began talking in a foreign language to the woman on my right. Now I helped the ~~[-]~~ preacher to hush Sir Alfred Turner, who was evidently bent on calling up the habitual controls of all the seances he had ever been to. The woman was very shy, or very much afraid, and it was hard to get to answer the spirit. Presently another voice talking in a foreign language came upon her right, and then,

further away still, a third voice. I found afterwards (for I stayed behind to have a talk with her) that the two near voices were talking in two Swiss dialects - one that of Basle and one that of [] Bern, and someone on the far side of the room said that the third voice was talking correct German. The woman said to me afterwards, [] I did not think there was a person in London who knew my language []. Then Sir Alfred Turner's subconscious triumphed and we had grey Weather and Blossom, controls the one of [] Husk, the other of Mrs Wriedt, and Katie King and John King, those universal controls. There had been loud raps from time to time and we had all been touched by the trumpet on head or shoulder, and now the musical box began to sound and to float round the room. Then three loud raps announced the seance was to close and we were told to sing. The [] preacher was so vehement that everybody should sing that even I, who do not know one note from another, joined in, but in a very low voice, being certain that I was out of tune. Suddenly we heard over our heads, the loud singing of a bird - a linnet or a thrush - and when we ceased it went on singing near to the ceiling as it seemed, then with a few gasps the medium awoke and told the preacher to light a candle. I asked the woman who had the conversations in Swiss dialects for her name and address. She gave it on condition that it should not be published.

Blanche Ronalds, 18 Upper Phillimore Gardens, W.

APPENDIX A: 10

Seance at Mrs Wriedt's¹

July 20, 1915

(extracts)

Present myself and Dr A. Wallace. Time 7 p.m. [...] Presently Wallace heard a faint voice. Then I heard it [...] & Wallace heard it say it lacked power. He was holding [the] trumpet. Then I held it & heard a faint voice but could not decipher words. [...] Wallace had communication with someone called [-], a friend who had died recently. [...] Then came a 'George'. [...] I could not catch the surname and Wallace said it is 'George Pollexfen [...]'. I said 'It is my uncle George Pollexfen'. The voice then told me that he was very happy [...]. I said that the work we did together (magical work) helps you after death and the voice [said] 'Oh inconceivably [?]. I am now able to help at the battle fields.'² [...] He said he would come to me when I was alone and I would see him. He then asked after my sister and said 'give my love to Lolly [?]' . He [-] his 'poor girl' and said he knew they were getting on well [-]. [...] Then Hugh³ came.

¹The manuscript reads 'Re[-] seance at Mrs Wriedt's!.

²In the 'Note-book of Stainton Moses' we read that 'Nothing is more dangerous than for souls to be rudely severed from their bodily habitation; and to be launched unto the spheres with angry passions stirred and bloodthirsty revengeful feelings dominant.' See Appendix D below.

³Lane.

He was glad we had found the codicil⁴ (pronounced it 'godicil') It would not be opposed. He said we had also the will of 1913 (he spoke the date very slowly). [...] He said he wished his aunt would give him a chance of speaking to her. [...] I told him how she found the codicil. [...] He was very [-] and thanked me again and again for what I was doing. [...] Then Leo came and at first we talked of theatre. [...] He then spoke in what seemed Italian and then I said I could not follow [...].

⁴See 'Clairvoyant Search for Will', Appendix C: 2.

APPENDIX A: 11

[Record of Seance]¹

[July 22, 1915]

On July 22 Lady [- -]., Miss S[-] and Sturge Moore came in during the evening. Miss S[-] did the automatic writing (see file) and this seemed [?] to come from Leo. I got her to surrender to what seemed impression from her control. I had a conversation with the control. He said that I was more inclined to believe some secondary personality theory than I myself [?] believed. He was no secondary personality with a symbolic imagination as I thought possible but the person he claimed to be. He was drawn to me because in life he had been all industrious [?], impulsive, all that his [-] and Africa[n] image [?] suggested symbolically for his language [?] was [-] symbolical and [-]. It was doubting [?], conscientious and timid [- -] and if associated with him [I would]² have perfected Nature. He asked me to write him a letter addressed to him as if I Africa [sic] giving all my doubts about spiritual things and then to write a reply as from him to me. He would contact me [~~if he could~~] in that reply and thus it would be really from him. (Miss S did not know that I had [- -] thought of using [?] her in some such way in some imaginary [- - -]).

W. B. Yeats, August 12, 1915

¹Untitled manuscript.

²'I would' is replacing some six words which are not legible.

APPENDIX A: 12

[Lady Gregory Converses with 'Hugh Lane']¹

Sunday, July 25, 1915

(extracts)

On Sunday July 25 Lady Gregory had a seance with Mrs Wriedt. It was at 11.30 in the morning. She asked me not to come. In a day or so after [-] she was much upset by it. It was held in the light and the moment she took up the trumpet a loud voice through it said 'I am Hugh'. What upset her always [?] was that when she asked how he was he said 'It is awful'. Later on he said he would be all right when his affairs would be 'straightened [?] out'. [...] He said 'I have kept my individuality'. He spoke of the codicil and was glad we had it. [...]

WBY. August 12, 1915

¹Untitled manuscript.

APPENDIX A: 13

Sitting with Mrs Leonard

Dec. 27th 1916

(extract)

Present: W. B. Yeats, U. V. T. and M. R. H. and Mrs Leonard in trance. W. B. Y., U. V. T. and M. R. H. anonymous, U. V. T. and M. R. H. taking notes. Time: 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon.

Control 'Feda'

F. Good morning. Good morning Mrs Twannis and Mrs Una. Feda has a nasty stuffy feeling this morning here. It's foggy, and Feda hates fogs and rain. Feda can feel that this gentleman's very psychic too. (to W. B. Y.) You know, you get a lot of writing; Feda sees you with miles and miles of writing around you. You get a lot of that through the spirit world, although you think you do it yourself. Feda means that the spirits on Feda's side give you their experiences; and so help you.

W. B. Y. I have studied automatic writing a lot.

F. You ought to write automatically yourself; you could do it.¹

¹ [Note in Yeats's hand] 'Leo Africanus', my guide as he claims to be once told me, or [-] to tell me by impressing the mind of Miss S[-] that if I would write on a certain subject he would write through me, [-]. This however would be rather intuition [?] than automatic.

W. B. Y. "One control has told me so.

F. Yes, it is so. Do you know that you have got an eastern guide?

W. B. Y. What part of the East does he come from?

F. He looks to Feda like a Persian, but it's difficult to tell between Persians and Arabs and Egyptians. Feda means that he is not a Hindu. He is clean-shaven.

W. B. Y. I only know that he is Eastern.

F. Well, anyway, he's not from India, and he says he helps you with your writing.

W. B. Y. He has told me so, if this is he.

F. He has been with you for many years.

W. B. Y. He says so; what language does he speak?

F. More than one, and he speaks an awfully old language too.

W. B. Y. How long has he been over there?

F. He says hundreds of years..

W. B. Y. How many hundreds?

F. Feda doesn't think it can be right, but he says he thinks thousands of years, two thousand years - but Feda doesn't think so.

W. B. Y. If he says that then he's not the guide I was thinking of.

F. Feda thinks it is only two or three hundred years, but he puts it into thousands, and he thinks he's right, but he can't be, or he wouldn't be able to communicate like this with Feda.

W. B. Y. Can you tell me of any big city that he lived

in?

F. Wait a minute, he may give that more easily when you are not thinking of it. You must have done a lot of writing, not automatic writing, Feda doesn't mean. This man is showing a room with furniture like a sitting room, and a table like a kind of desk. And he has sat and helped you there. And he shows Feda your writing going out here and there, and not kept to yourself like people keep automatic writing. Now he is saying something to Feda which she can't quite understand. Walky, Watty, no, it is Watson, Watson.

W. B. Y. I don't know any Watson; what is he to do with me?

F. No, you didn't know him on the earth plane, and he is no relation to you. Oh dear, Mrs Twannis ought to know this, the guide is looking at her now.

M. R. H. I don't place him.

F. The guide says that he's a real person but that Watson is not his proper name, and that you should know what this means. You will know too, when he goes away. (To W. B. Y.) He's on the other side, and he's not quite a guide, and he's helped you with a big bit of writing you did. You did it in two lots, a bit in one lot, and then you had to do another lot.

W. B. Y. That so often happens with one's work.

F. Watson is a real person, and he thinks you ought to know about him. The guide puts stress on this, and that you mustn't forget it. This Watson

first came to you twenty or twenty-two years ago; he didn't come to you right here in London, but somewhere away from London. Yes, and your guides don't always come to you here in London, but somewhere away where there is more air. They don't always come to you when you are living here. [...]

APPENDIX B

Leo Africanus

Some months ago a medium Miss S — [sic] and one or two other friends were at my rooms. Presently Miss S — who had heard my account of you seemed to be controlled or perhaps I should say over shadowed. She began to speak rapidly saying whatever came to [?] into [?] her head. You were as it seemed the speaker. [~~If I would write out my difficulties in a letter addressed to you as though you were still living in the past and then write another letter in your name you would see to it that the second letter, [-----]. I should be over shadowed in my turn.~~] I have had but little experience of Miss S or of mediums. Once, the only time in fact when I had consulted her, 'William Morris' had written through her hand and as he had written this very day through the hand of another medium in my presence I assumed that he possessed telepathic powers at least. What impressed me now was a curious overtone [?]. You were my opposite. By association with one another we should each become more complete, you had been unscrupulous and [-], I was over cautious and conscientious. Then you said if I would write a letter to you as if you were still living among your Moors or Sudanese, and put into it all my difficulties and you would answer it in your name, you would over shadow me

[- - -] and answer all my doubts. I have beside me as I write the translation of the only work of yours extant today - from this one assumes this¹ is still extant. It was published in London in 1600 and was translated by John Pory, 'lately of Gonerivill and Caius College in Cambridge' and called 'A Geographical History of Africa written in Arabicke and Italian by John Leo, borne in Granada and brought up in Barbarie'. There is also a long subtitle announcing that it contains descriptions 'of the regions, cities, towns, mountains, rivers and other places throughout all the north and principal parts of Africa' and other matters 'gathered partly out of' your own 'diligent observation and partly out of the ancient records and Chronicles of the Arabians and Moors'. When you first came to me I had to the best of my belief never heard of you nor of your work, but now I have read a great part of it and picture [?] you with some clearness, especially as a [student] young man studying and making verses in the town of Fez you have described with such minute detail. At the moment I imagine you as a student of this College where there were 'three cloisters to walk in, most curiously and artificially made with certain [-] pillars of divers colours [- - -]. And between fuller and fuller 'arches 'ornamented [?]² with gold, azur and divers other

¹Apparently the original.

²Quotation marks as in the manuscript.

colours' walking perhaps where 'runneth' through the College 'a little stream in a most clear and pleasant channel the [- -] edges whereof are [-] frames of marble and stones of M[-]' or perhaps with your fellow poets chose [?] choose [?] soup [??] on all the days of the year '[-] of love' going 'betimes in the morning' where [?] Mahomet's holiday or governor' thus [?] from the [-] scale' you also may read some 'elegant and [-]' poems in the Prophet's praise 'to a great audience of people'. It is [-] that a shade can elect to appear as you, or old when it would speak to men and it may be you would prefer me to imagine you as you were after your capture by Venetian pirates and your liberation from slavery by Pope Leo the tenth whose name you took. You have spoken to me so much of the drama, that I am ready to imagine you are attending their performances of the plays of Plautus [?] arranged in rooms of Cardinal — [sic]. You saw the beginnings of the drama and may [-] watch [?] through [?] our eyes today its corruption and decline.. You wish me to [tell] you what leaves me incredulous, or unconvinced. I do not doubt any more than you did when [sic] the Alchemists of Fez the existence of God, and 'I follow tradition stated for the last time explicitly in Swedenborg and in Blake, that his influence descends to us through hierarchies of mediatorial shades and angels. I doubt however, though not always, that the shades who speak to me through mediums are the shades they profess to be. The doubt is growing more faint but still it returns

again and again. I have to continually remind myself of some piece of evidence written out and examined and put under a letter in my file. How can I feel certain of your identity when there has been so much to rouse my suspicion. You came to me first on [space left] at Mrs Wriedt's at Wimbledon. ~~[--- Dr Abraham Wallace was the only other sitter. It was at 3 in the afternoon.]~~³ The lights were no sooner out than I heard your voice very loud and with what seemed to me a slight Irish accent⁴ as though you drew your expressions from my memory, or my habit of speech. I thought the accent a little more marked than my own. You told me that you were Leo my guide and seemed astonished that I had never heard of you. 'I am Leo the writer' you repeated, and I would find you in the books [?] or hear of you at Rome. You spoke too of your travels and said that you had been with me from childhood:⁵ [Yeats intended to cross out the following section] at once I [---] fifteen or twenty years before, at the only other [-] seance I had ever attended, many faces had shown themselves by the light of a phosphorescent slate that seemed to [be] carried [?] from place to place and one of these had whispered [---] [in] my ear words which I had thought to be 'Leonora Arguite [?]' [-] the medium declared this to be 'Leonora your guide'. I had been

³ Note that in his record of Leo's first appearance ('Report of Seance'; Appendix A: 1) Yeats notes that the seance was held at 6.30.

⁴In 'Report of Seance' Yeats says that 'Leo' had 'a strong Irish accent'.

⁵[Yeats's note] 'I have to allow much to the spiritual

always conscious of some being [- - -] and once when I came to you, child [?] I heard its voice, as though someone [-] speaking in the room but something [- - -] which was a little [-] too [-] always prevented me [?] from re-calling that faint voice. I remember [-] how a little before the seance with William [?] I had called on every [-] the old Dublin doctor. I found a dozen people in his drawing room and among them a girl telling fortunes by Cheiromancy. I [think] she was new at her subject and had a book [?] on Cheiromancy open on the chair beside her. I had known her some years before, and had found her a sensitive and though I had never knowingly hypnotized her, now discovered that she was a hypnotic subject. Thus it was easy to call up visions [to] help her mind. I asked her to tell my fortune - I am copying my full notes made at the time - but said she must come through the folding doors [-] the next room. She brought the book with her and spread it open upon the table, and began explaining the lines. Suddenly her voice changed and another personality spoke through her of my most personal affairs and changed [- - -] more than ever to vision and dream and I would bring a closer relation between this world and the next than ever before. After some words of a like sort a step in the passage caused the cheiromantist to awake from her trance dazzled and ignorant of all that

experience for the key or key-mind and [- - -] discussion.'

had passed. I had felt I was being tempted with a childhood temptation, with a crude appeal to my vanity. [- - -] a new appeal more than [?] crude, I had 'a key-mind', I was necessary and so on. [End of section that Yeats intended to cross out.] Before the next seance I [~~looked up~~] read in Chambers biographical dictionary about Leo Africanus and [-] then [?] began [to] question the voice [that] claimed to be his voice. I was not at all impressed and thought Mrs Wriedt, who is perhaps a ventriloquist of some kind, looked up guides for her visitors in Chambers, when knew nothing of their dead friends and relations. In this chance [?] she may have been in a hurry for plans [?]. Leo Africanus, a geographer and traveller, is for me no likely guide. However after consulting [?] a reference to the proceedings of the Hakluyt Society [- - - - -] I discovered that Leo Africanus was a distinguished poet among the Moors. On [space left] I had another seance, and then on [space left] still another and more detailed on [-] including a correction of t[w]o statements [?] in Chambers that after your twenty years in Rome had died in your own country in ? 1542. Leo had died the voice said in a battle of the Franco Spanish war, but it was something that helped on [space left] that made me begin to think that perhaps you still lived, and had [?] really spoken to me. A woman sat next me. I discovered she knew some Italian. I knew something of her. She belongs to a well known Scandinavian family and was certainly not confidant of the medium.

I said if a spirit who calls himself Leo could speak to her in Italian. A little later she had a confusing [?] conversation in Italian with the voice. She did not understand a [- -] for her Italian is not very abundant, [- - - -] but Leo's Italian she said was excellent. A little later she was talking Norwegian to a different spirit, and certainly we had got beyond the Medium's knowledge, and the problem [?] had become psychological. I had already felt when I noticed the slight Irish accent which had been similar [?] that perhaps [- -] is necessary to look for [- - - - - - - - - -] in [-] our mind, I thus became more [-] when [?] Dr Wallace who is Scotch had been [-] at one long [?] seance [- -] [and the] control of the medium had spoken with a Scotch accent. I was reminded too of certain earlier experiences. The name Leo recalled the one of the only two other seances I had ever attended. It was fifteen or twenty years earlier. Mr Williams was the medium. I had not begun to take notes but my memory [?] was very [-]. Since these first seances your voice, if yours it is, has come often, at Mrs Wriedt's seances when I have been present. I will not describe this in detail. The main [-] result has been that with the fading of the effect upon me of the Italian conversation I had found myself more and more sceptical. Your voice does not suggest an actual man. The voice has something artificial which is [-] hard to describe, and [-] I feel as if a preacher [?] [is] speaking who is speaking however under conditions we do not understand [?]

and to [- -] is urgent and indefinite. I heard one voice and this was when you were first spoken to in Italian with [?] an emotional [?] intimation. The voice at first is like those of habitual controls, John King, Dr Sharp, and so on, and I am suspicious of it as I am of them [-] and suspect it, as I am but seldom at the moment suspicious [of] those who claim to be men and women if [- -] dead [- - -] secondary personalities.⁶ [Five lines deleted.] Perhaps you found those [-] sentences in the memory of [my] Scandinavian neighbours and for this reason I had asked you and while [- - - -] medium, had a [-] of Arabic. I may bring an Arabic scholar [- -] so to [- - -] and [- -] a name among the [-, - - -]. [-] may [- -] 'spirits' who have [-] themselves to Stainton Moses to Moses or likely [-] by our presence and [- -] of the [-, -] and [-] or run [?] through the [- -] and they [-] have made up their obscure histories from old newspapers. You [are] a secondary personality if by [- -] is of Mrs Wriedt [who knows] the theory consulted perhaps Chambers biographical dictionary. Can I make the deduction that I or Mrs Wriedt may have very likely known its [-], but the medium [-] more obscure person [-] come to, was less likely to [- - -] among the old newspapers as the [- -, -] less to have contained [?] several such sources. But if you can read my mind or the Scandinavian woman's mind, why not some

⁶Yeats's note, three lines written on a separate page, is illegible.

distant mind, for we have no proof that distance affects the faculty. Can in fact a secondary personality [-] [obtain] knowledge drawn from many sources and so build up a complex knowledge, and even a difficult language. Certainly I am incredulous, but maybe this is only a [- - -] of the unknown. After I [-] after years of investigation [I have] accepted the most incredible facts. You may have [-] up to see Mrs Wriedt after she returns from America but the [- - - -], [-] you would find all you needed [?] in her memory. But if you are a secondary personality you can create for yourself [?] a solid body [-] I [- -] use [- - -] you have left I [- -, -] flowers and touched me upon my hands, my knees and my face. That would not be any difficulty to most continual investigators [?] for they argue that if we are ready to grant such powers to the dead, there is no reason why we should deny them to a portion of the mind of a living man. Dr Ochorowicz [?] has even created a very [-] and satisfactory secondary personality which works with his medium Madame Tous[s]ands endowing [?] it by suggestion [- - - -], or [-] or with the reliable [-] habits becoming for his experiments. He had been annoyed by a charming but unreliable [?] Moorman [?], and this [-] more [- - -], who [-] Norman [?] [-] has, a [-] girl [- -] logic and ask [-, - -] but he tells [?] us some [- - -] still of the mind of his medium. Certainly [?] one cannot any longer [- -] say with [?] Prof. Hyslop that the secondary [- -] personality lacks supernormal

powers⁷ and once we grant this power what limit shall we set to it. Why should I grant you ~~[only]~~ let us say only the power to ~~[be]~~ read my thoughts - as if this ~~[-]~~ have given me ~~[- - - -]~~ if you wish I ~~[-]~~ a ~~[- -]~~ an English a being as complex as my own and yet ~~[-]~~ from me an intermittent ~~[-]~~, and a measure of belief to keep you from dying, or ~~[-]~~ whom ~~[- - - -]~~ endure our needs ~~[?]~~ then at the hour of some ~~[-]~~. I cannot be ever certain that you may not survive me, for you can be independent of me in space, and as ~~[a]~~ Moorman ~~[?]~~, as it appears has spoken to Mr Fielding ~~[sic]~~ through a medium who ~~[- - -]~~, his, perhaps you may be independent in time. V — ~~[sic]~~ the personality created by Dr Ochorowicz ~~[?]~~ suggests when ~~[?]~~ asked if the ~~[- - - -]~~ medium saw ~~[- -]~~ if he could attach himself to someone else. On this subject we ~~[?]~~ had had one ~~[?]~~ investigator. ~~[Five lines crossed out.]~~ We have some evidence but yet ~~[-]~~ completed that the personality is passing from medium to medium while ~~[?]~~

⁷ ~~[Yeats's note]~~ ~~[-]~~ the question of certain phenomena ~~[- - - -]~~ the 'telepathic themes' which to ~~[- -]~~ of ~~[- - - - - -]~~ a light thing. If Leo Africanus, can ~~[-]~~, is half ~~[-]~~ a body and at some point of space outside the medium body ~~[- - -]~~ and ~~[-]~~, and ~~[-]~~ solid ~~[?]~~ objects ~~[- - - - -]~~, ~~[-]~~ a separate mind, ~~[-]~~ I ~~[-]~~ he ~~[-]~~ own mind, and ~~[-]~~ in the ~~[- -]~~ my brain ~~[-]~~ sympathies ~~[-]~~ in the medium's mind will account for its actions. ~~-~~ may less ~~[- -]~~ of Leo and the ~~[- - -]~~ of the ~~[-]~~ of our ~~[-]~~, but there is a third mind to ~~[-]~~ this knowledge to its own end. For the ~~[-]~~ being the secondary personality has become primary. Once I have granted to you that independence, and what limits can I set upon your freedom. ~~[- -]~~ must ~~[-]~~ be but do I know them.

[] its memory Dr Phinuit,⁸ or [] a [] a secondary personality of Mrs Piper — this suggests [] his shape has been [], yet Prof. Hyslop ~~[has recorded]~~ tells how he [] to [] man in [] England he complained of an old man who annoyed him by talking to him of his personal affairs [?]. The [] Mrs Piper was still [?] in America, so if the control called Phinuit he had crossed the Atlantic, and one imagines [] inconvenient, by the [] of [] a body. This vague evidence is stronger when one compares it with the stronger [?] evidence of these beings we have agreed to call 'spirits' [] passage [?] will always [] memory from medium to medium — I have had seven cases in my own investigation, and there are several in the published account of the mediumship of Mrs Wriedt⁹ — and this is some evidence of a continuous [] contact [] many years after the death of its medium. It may not have been in my mind or Mrs Wriedt's that you discovered a memory [] after [] the pages of Chambers biographical dictionary and when you first appeared you may have been a [] fragment of some mind unknown both to her and to me. Does in fact the human mind possess a power like this []? Perhaps every mind has originated at

⁸One of Mrs Piper's controls.

⁹Presumably Yeats is referring to W. Usborne Moore's Glimpses of the Next State (London, 1911) and The Voices (London, 1913).

conception [?] [- -] the seance room but uses [-] [a] new way, a faculty necessary and [- - - -] and now a new race of [-] minds, who after this [- - -] grow and change according to their own will, as [they] continue [?] [to] seek a more solid [?] [- -] being are in the end dependent not upon an individual body, but upon the body of the human race as a whole. [- - - - - - - -] replace the phantoms [?], has been [?] or [- -] the belief [?] is [-] seen [? seer ?] I argued [- - -] explains the [- -] and [- - - - - - - -] of [- -] of an [-] race. As we live we define our personality, [- -] theories [?] this [is] our occupation, and our possession but [?] the [-], can [-] do so, by thoughts and [-] and [- - -, -] suggests [- -] to personality itself, and creates a [- -], and discovers [?] [-, - - - -] or [-] of the ramifications [-] other [-] and [-], if the being asked seeks by its means [?] its own definition [- -] of our [-], perhaps of our [-] belief. Does he ever know that he deceives, when to [-] has gone so far, that he has divided [?] himself, from the thoughts and actions [?] of the mind where [? when ?] he was born. Are you not perhaps becoming a second Leo Africanus, a shadow upon the wall, a strong echo, and yet made subtle [?] by powers the old traveller had known, a [-] with knowledge and faculties [-] from many minds.

Leo Africanus to W. B. Yeats

I understand enough of the thought of your age and understand

your difficulty on philosophical grounds, and because of certain experiences you believe as still do the majority of your contemporaries that is a god [?] and happy is [?] unhappy [-], but when you examine [~~phenomena~~] appearances you are mastered by a formula. I must not pre-[- -] her cause. [-] I have examined the known causes and [-] you reject from known causes all that has come to you from philosophy, and religious tradition. You only recognised what is in the best opinion of your time and has been proved by deductive science. [~~Like the Swiss Professor Mr Flourney, from whom I find a number of [-] quotations in your memory, you are prepared to believe as a man of science what you believe as a man of science.~~] You wish to assume, [- - - -] the existence of a spirit but you find if you can explain everything, though [- - -] explanation fills you with incredulity, by some faculty of the living mind. You insist on considering spirits as unknown causes [?], though they have whispered to you [- -] enough. Like the Swiss Professor Mr Flourney, from whom I find an [-] quotation in your memory, you are prepared to believe as a man what you reject as a man of science. Yet the formula of science, though necessary as a mechanism [- - -], precisely because the known is much less than the unknown, ensures that a scientific exposition can but have [-] value. In your heart you know [~~some two lines crossed out~~] that all philosophy [?] that has lasting [-] is founded on the interests of god, and that he being all good and all power [?] it follows Henry More the Cambridge Platon[ist]

so nicely explains that all our deep desires are images of the [-]. We are [- -] and shall [- - - - -] god because he cannot being good but fulfill our desires. Yet desire is not reason and [- -], though it can arouse the intellect to its lost subtlety, is but the deep where reason flows, or perhaps the light wherein the separate [?] objects of our thought find colour and definition. You are sympathetic, you meet many people, you discuss [?] much, you must meet all these doubts on the way, and so cannot have [- -] a life of your own as did Swedenborg, Boehme, and Blake. Even the wisdom that we send you, but deepens your bewilderment [?], for when the writer [?] of your [-] of [-] wrote you through the ignorant hand of a friend 'why do you think that [-] excludes intellect. [- -] the highest [-] of the human intellect, it is the only gift that man can offer to god and this is why we must [- - -] of him I [- - -]' you but sought the more [-] to meet not your own difficulty but the difficulties of others. [Two lines deleted.] Entangled in error, you are but a public man, yet once you could [- - - -], and that insufficient [- - -] must have led you [?] to [- - -] eye and that eye has not seen. I will speak to you and not your friends, and will [-] you begin by assurances, the existence [?], of myself and [~~my fellow spirits~~] of the shades that are my fellows. Plutarch [?] has written ...

. [sic]

In my life I travelled over much of the known earth. I

made and make many sudden decisions [?], I was often in danger, and all but always in solitude, and so became hard and keen like a hunting animal, and now for your good and my own I have chosen to linger near, your contrary mind. There are other shades near you but with them I have no companionship [?], for they are cold [- - -] whereas I am impetuous and hot. All living minds are surrounded by shades, who are the contrary will which presents before the [-] mind and the mind of the sleeper ideal images. The living mind comes [? could ?] [-] for a moment [-] on succour, for god does not act immediately upon the mind but through med[-] forms. Their powers, however, are not messengers or god understand[s?] the world [?]. They do not carry a letter in these hands, even in their memories for being [?] plastic images, changeable as the wind [?], they can clothe one another's thought, the subtle mind with the more [-], the [-] body [-] as it were the more delicate. Let us shave [?] his head, says somebody in Ra[bellais] of a too [-] messenger and see if his message is [-] upon his [-] with [-] ink. [- - - - -] our message, [- - - - -] body and our mind. If I have been sent to give you confidence and solitude it is because I am a brooding and braggart shade, and even in this I am not wholly stable, for at times I am aware of a constraint upon my thoughts or my passion deepens because of one who is remote and silent and whom while I lived in Rome I was forbidden to call Mahomet.

To expound our nature and lay your doubts I shall began [sic] not from secondary personalities, which are obscured, but with your dreams, your exper[-]. Let science hurl upon our [-], she has her necessary labour wisdom, like all [- -] forms of art is founded upon experience. Sometimes when you are dreaming you can imagine you will dream that you [- - - -] in a [-], and afterwards when examine [?] the opinion [?] discover that both [-] have made [-], though, if by [- -] a part [?] of your daily mind, but show this mind [?] [- -] you [-] but [-] with yourself, whom [- - - -] you, and when you lie in bed after fancying you see for certain minutes, a foil [- - -] from the darkness, and wholly as [- - - -]? What [- -]. So like [-] in [-] a play these characters seem to move and [-] by themselves [-] the point [-] you [- - - -], - -] will doubled [?]. Is this [-] a begging [-] mind [- - - -] up the [- - - -] secondary personality [-] it may be, you believe perhaps [-] is [-] and is P[-] and yet [-] but in society [?] of our mind. Was Dante wrong when he saw [-] the [- - - -] left [-] the human head [- - -]. [~~When you write a play~~] [Space with word 'quote' centered. First line of text crossed out. It seems that the sentence starting 'When you write a play' is continued. Unfortunately I cannot read a great number of words here. At any rate, there are more references to dreams. 'Leo' writes something to the effect that the pre-existence of interlocutors can be substantiated 'with all the arguments'

by which Henry More 'uses to prove the immortality of the soul'.]

at any rate [?] cannot [?] with confidence appears that these images of ~~[dreams ---]~~ are never your [-] will. Certain scientists that [-] have spoken have only [-] their full meaning after many years, [-] spoken [- - - - -] 'by [-] as images [?] of [- -] sleeps and it is like him who sleeps but is not [- - - - -].' [Some two lines crossed out, space left] and certain others, [- - - - -] for in [- - -] have showed you details and even f[-] of events. For you [- - -] dream [-] among the tricks, [- -] shape of [-, - - - - -, - - - - - - -], you know that the pre-existence of [-] interlocutors can be [-] with all the arguments you [-]. More has to prove the immortality of the soul. Swed[en]bor[g], however, who perfected [- - -], so much that More [- - -] said that we accompany man always, [-] when he [-] [line crossed out except for first word 'but' [?'that' ?] may [- - - -] dreams, because [- - - - -] that we can but sleep when he [-]. You [- -] have felt us by your shoulder [- - -], and [-] the [- -] is explained I felt [?], [-] confuses, the [-] dream, [- -, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -] that perhaps on the [-, - -] nothing but [-]. In the [- - - - - - - - - - -, - -] see [-] a sort [?] of [- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -] somebody will discover, [- - - - - - - - - - -]. Can we separate this from the dream [-] has in [-], if [-] allegorical [?] form

of some [-, -. -] all alike, you see, as Henry More has written the gods of the dead [go] fishing for man with dreams, or as men do, [- - - - -, - - - - -]. It need not be too hard to imagine this also [-] for the gods, that dream entangles dream. [Six lines crossed out, begun again on next page.]

After my death in battle I was for a time unconscious and this confused [-]. At first I thought myself still living and fighting - given [- - - -] - and afterwards I saw [?] or in dream [-] glimpses of water [?] and afterwards I found myself at Fez where I had lived as a young man. I [-] among crowded streets and more than once spoke to some passer [?] by and it was very [strange] when no one spoke to me, and when no one turned to look at me, and I was [-] dressed like an Italian, then the memory of my death returned. I wandered much here and between the house of the basket maker and the saddle maker I [- -], it seemed of some segment [?] of memory [- - -] I had lodged in my student year. Presently I began to meet faces I had known and it did not seem strange to me, that they were not changed or aged - I had changed [-] to an old Fez and I began to re-live [-] in a dream, a tragic event. When a student I had won to me a friend [-] and afterwards the friend had fallen a melancholy and neglected his studies. One day I met him by [- -], answered his reproaches with incourtesy [?]. I [-] at all again but now I judge as I judge myself - yet the old plea

and [-] returns also but in a [-] less in two. When I awoke I was among strange faces, who passed [?] on as before without notice or recognition. I [-] towards the palace of princes, I saw [-] the sun dial in the square that it [-] was a little after six in the evening, I remember that it was a little before six that I had met [- - - -] forty years before. I remembered now [?] a death, very [-] and soon discovered that this was the fourth anniversary [?] of my [-]. My life as a shade seemed to prove more slowly [- -, - - - -] seemed to me incredibly quiet, as a movement [?] of flies on a river had seemed to be when alive. Presently I began to dream again. I was in a desert [-] and quarrelling [?] with a medium [?] [- - -]. As [-] I [-] from dream crisis to crisis ~~but now I was~~ the same dream reliving again and again, let some powers that seemed from beyond [- - - - -] and changing their form and colour. At Rome I had seen Michael Angelo at work upon the scaffolds in the Sistine Chapel, and once I had been in his shadow and watched him drawing from [-] model. The events in life and the earlier dreams were [?] like the model was [- - -] changes, this resembles more what I saw in [-] or [-] when the scaffolds was [sic] taken away. But now in my state of [-] I do not seem to wholly wake [?], for side by side with the streets of Fez, or desert I seem to see another world [?]. [- -] growing [- - -]. ~~When [-] seem~~ the double ~~of this~~ a year, less [- - - - - - - - - - -]

again. Some of them I recognise. [] a long [] I recognise [] the most part with difficulty some because [] had [] and some because [] terrible to look [] [] like some strange work of art. I notice that those who after many years [] seemed to [] about the streets. [] stands with a shade who had [], though less than others. I am not sure who he is but he is like that student and I have begun suddenly [] to talk of []. While I am talking I see among the [] a group of [space left] who have just come [] the city. I feel a [] to be [] and [] this other study by the [] with me. The [one line scored through] we follow [] of [] - some dozen or more [] - to a narrow passage though a door was locked after them. One lights a fire and begins to cook some fish, while a fat [] old man, who seems to have [], which he had taken from [] a skin of wine. They began to [] out of the skin. I felt as [] as the smell of the wine. I could now have [], a [] which seemed [] to [] itself all my longer [] life. It seemed to me that I could [] the old man's ribs [] - I felt something [] in his flesh [] he [] was about to [] has come again. I prayed to Mahomet to help and lost consciousness. When I came to myself again the old man [] few [] days and open eyes and all about were the [space left] [], some [] their hearts and some []. I said to the other shade 'I have no [] of [].' He replied, you have not drunk. The old man has not drunk,

when you [- -] of [-] spoken [- - -], Mahomet and [- - -] for these [-] and their lives I answered '[- - - - - -]'. He answered 'I am the older shade and I understand. ['] When he [-] the skin his conscience troubled him, you who [- -] that of his mind [?] dreamed that you are Mahomet', and now you may be sure this [-] the old man, who will [-] who presents nor [?] those other [- - - -] again. [Space left.]

II

Once I was alone in a desert, watching a [space left] rabbit [?] rolling [?] in the hot sunlight, I began to wonder how he felt for all forms of [- -] were an [-] to my imagination and presently my shape resembled his, though the sun remained to [-] as a picture of sunlight and the desert sand still saw a picture [-.¹⁰ - - -] in the purge of [space left] and from this I began to amuse myself by taking various shapes, sometimes as I pass some man or woman I [-] myself I [-] as it were the scenes [?] I come to [-] from their minds, for as my link with several [- -] their images become more and more apparent. At other times I would [-] call up a form from my own memory, my image or I was at [space left] or at Rome or in my childhood, and became at once this image. My body was plastic to every impulse, my will [- - - - - -] which [-] old comrades could have recognised. It has come to correspond

¹⁰ [Yeats's note] The [space left] went on licking its paws. Neither smells nor hears nor sees me.

with my character and passions but [— — —] things I began [—] of old experiences.

III

But while I try [to] impress upon your brain events I am full of doubt. I am not even certain, that I am not certain that I do not mistake the image I discover there for my [?] own [?] memories and all [—] is as an heresy. Once you began to describe a picture you had [—] on, one [— — —] to influence. Besides I am conscious [?] of them and [?] of our [— — —] to help [—] against [— — —] have few friends. It is better for me to speak in more general terms for in most men the brain is only the most sensitive of our instruments — more sensitive than the Oija [sic]¹¹ or the planchette, when its thoughts are abstract and general. Then only can I often [—] it away from our logical necessity to another pre[—] and another necessity and then you can harder even at times know that it is influenced [?] Henry More who has gathered [?] up so much of the Platonism of the Renaissance [?] insists in this essay upon the immortality of the soul — Chapter [space left] — that memory is not seated [?] in the plastic [?] body as Swedenborg had begun to assert, but in a more delicate body.¹² This

¹¹ Apparently the 'ouiija-board'.

¹² In this connection see 'Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places': 'they [spirits] have bodies as plastic as their minds that flow so readily into the mould of ours

body was he wrote what medieval writers called the animal spirits, a fine luminous and placid [?] substance defined [?] by the [-] of the nerves throughout [?] the blood and the flesh. These animal spirits are but a [-], of what he called the 'spiritus [?] mundi'. When the animal spirits withdrew from the man in trance or in death, this formed his airy body, and was in one state or in the other plastic [- -] or another fancy. The [- -] reshapes it to cat [?], or hare [?], and a separated [?] spirit, or [-] should [- -] the [- -] body [- -] itself in [- - -], - -] itself [- -] and [- -], this it might be recognised by child or grandchild. He calls it the airy body because [- - - - - - - -] of the elements must stand for states purer and less heavy elements with [-]. Of the body of flames I should not speak because in all my hundred years of [-] and [-], and I [-] so [- -]. I recognise that the spiritus mundi [- - - - - - - -], but if the vague imagination of the old woman [-] perhaps but by a [- -] spell nor to [-] a hare that might deceive the hounds it must give a whole image. You need [-] by [- - - -] to come to her [-], for [- - -] shaping and awakening [-] patterns, scenes of [-], this could [-] you [-] may [-] to [-] from themselves before you. Every [- -] can see [-] like, and

and he [Swedenborg] remembers having seen the face of a spirit change continuously and yet keep always a certain generic likeness' (IIWFT, 35). See also Yeats's essay on 'Witches and Wizards and Irish Folk-lore', in Lady Gregory's Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland (Gerards Cross, 1970), p. 303.

the psychologist can [- -] the argument [- -] made out,
 blue wings, or by elephants [-] with brilliant [-] and
 memory of some seeming[ly] forgotten fragments [- -] then
 remember the [-] of some conjurer of [-] perhaps [?], but
 no craftsman could [- - - -] may or will engage in the
 [-], some few minutes, and because in the winking of an eye
 complete in all [- -] detail. The same [- -] for the seance
 room and you ask [-] which are these grotesque [?] hands
 [- - -] soft perfume, deny the trance of Lucifer [?]
 Pallider [?], and any one of them a good hours work for
 an excellent sculpture, [- - - -], complete in all [-, -]
 as [-], during [?] the [-] of Madame D[-]. Henry More
 so [-] the like problem in the formulation [?] of a child
 in the womb, believing the project [?] [- - -] gains an
 impulse towards form completed by 'spiritus mundi' [-]
 is perhaps this error, your century has named the un-
 conscious, by [-] air [-] is so full of images that
 Cornelius Agrippa believed sensitive men passing by when
 some unknown murder had been committed could not help but
 shudder. The Spiritus Mundi is [-] the place of [- -] and
 of all things [that] have been or yet shall be, and all
 things began [?] all [- - - - -] men's eyes, for all
 serpents and animal [?] forms, all that is serpentine [?]
 is a [-] force, and force is the imagination, the [-].
 When we die [we] have nothing but our memories: we can
 longer pro-create, but those memories our [- - - - -],
 - - - [-]. We are not [-] solitary for we can [?] share [-]

memory - like some drifter, [-] - and [-] a common world, just as it [-] has happened that two sleeping men, a sleeping man and woman, can share the same dream. But these accounts [-] the action or in the thought of life. [-] and of these there are [- -], not [- - -] kin. We can not [- -, - - -], nor to [- -] of our [-], not the echo of us, and [- -] sweeter [?] and softer in our [-] distance.

IV

Yet [- - -], nor yet this other of [-], and there I mean [?] more [-] of [- -] the truth, [-] our images return to you and not only in dreams, [-] even if centuries ago exalting, or troubling the slumber that is deep and sacred, but¹³ you are in the presence of the dead more than you can know because you are never out of it. At some moment of crisis, your movements are automatic, almost [?] unconscious, and you mean to crush [?] perhaps by [-] scruples and [-], and when it [- - -] the ancestors, and more remote spirits [-] to [-] by some [-] of sympathy [-], who knowingly or unknowingly have folded you up [- - -].¹⁴ You let [-] a child and say I can see his father in his face [-] understand the [-] is our mind [-] or even in his own body for the a [sic] separated soul has many collaborators

¹³The passage on verso is crossed out.

¹⁴The passage on verso is hardly legible.

when at the sudden crisis of its being, [-] to shape [- -] a body in the womb, nor are the [- -] of any different [-] when for the comforter, if the eggs [- -, -, -], cobwebs and [-], nor is [three lines crossed out] my memories of the bees [-] lives from those [-] suck and [-] in our [-] flowers.

V

This commences, when but the normal life of man, [-] my [-], passing or [- -] through your brain, [-] understand of any generalization not so much as can be arranged as broken [-]. If I had not [-] my [-], to explain what I mean by memory or to define this Spiritus Mundi, [-] are spreading modelling clay where every thought is moulded. I could be overpowered by this memory of mind that gathers images about it, like a child playing with dolls. [- - - -] we [-] though may be you have been so [-], that you have [-] to know things [?] of reason between them but I cannot [-] to a cobweb. I [-] that this abnormal consciousness, what is [-] a previous [-] the others and [- -] fragmentary [-], created to those of us, who run no danger, [-] much [-] of the human [- -]. Our airy bodies, which take in repose the shape [- - - - -] body or the shape modified by the ruling passion, can be changed at will whether this [?] will be your will or that of their own in some other spirit. When they approach a man in whom the animal spirits are not wholly inseparable from [- - - - -]

ancestral [?] spirits whose [-], and [-] up [-] this new form enough of the atomics of flesh and bone to become visible to one or more of the human senses. This form and the [- -] which are but a [-] of the man's views, or are those atomics his body can [-] fragmentary and interpret. I will be somehow unscrupulous, and more often mischievous as a child is, and not because [of] evil motive, but because a fragment it understands but dimly the consequences and [-] of events, and because it may contain some strong desires not at last [-] the new or [-] hundred desires and purposes. We could confess a form, and still less often make it conscious of any memory, but that of the man or woman who has [-] it out, often [-] lose our own identity and believe that we have had no life but [-] few [-] or memories of a darkened chamber [about two lines crossed out] and when we [- -] a form it is but seldom our own. We [spirits] choose the appearance, body shape, drawn perhaps from some family portrait, that he may be recognised, or [-] one from some man or distant need. ~~[In the middle ages, other proof of the soul's survival [-] of our identities]~~ Yet what you see and hear is always a dream that is a continual substitution of the familiar image for the difficult [- - -] as when the [-] of [-] steps from a deep to a shallow dream. [One line crossed out.] In the middle ages when we were no [-] about to [-], we [-] and had no [-] to prove our identity, as we were conjurers and [- -] by certain [?] illusions, with [- -] to make them strange or powerful. Sometimes even in your

world we make you remember the middle ages or when a [-] to give proof of her identity can make the [-] sway [- - -], and cause the sound of tramping feet and dragging notes [-] and the noise of water and wind. Just as crystals [-] according to certain laws - 'laws of [-]' - so we soon discovered that a mediumship seemed split in a half a dozen [-] dramatizations - a child always in high spirits, a [-] deep voiced man, an American Indian perhaps whose simple [-] is [- - - - -] 'big [-]', 'great chief', 's[-]' and so on. We amuse ourselves by moving the [-], choosing the voice that comes easier [?], and yet I should not say choose, for you [-] or [-] you [-] and we [-] began to dream. ~~[For our own thoughts [-] if our own thoughts and mental pictures]~~ We have a [-] of thought [- -] gathered from the medium's mind and minds in [-] with it, that correspond to our own thoughts and mental pictures, but are altogether different. We have changed all your [-] and expressions [?] or you would of your own return to the narrow streets of Fez and yet we are the same spirits. When the medium is '[-]' - you will remember the ancient oracles [?] upon that - which means it is empty and yet sensitive - [-] and ceremony could once [-] such [-] - and the change [- - - -] at times we keep our memories.

VI

But if we can draw forms out of your minds - by [- - -] memory ourselves in a distorting glass - ~~[two lines crossed~~

out] we can call souls by calling up some associated form. Sir K[-] Digby when travelling from Italy [-] Spain had to [-] a Brahman, who [some two lines crossed out] seeing [- -] poor spirits he was offered to find a remedy. Sir K[-] Digby who had heard that the woman he loved was faithless [?] and immoral [- -] could be now. The Brahman [-] at last took a little book out of his pocket and began reading in a low voice from the book. Presently Sir K[-] Digby saw a lady sitting [-] and [- -] and on this came nearer and said that she was his own sweetheart [?]. He pointed her out to the Brahman, who made no answer but went on reading. Sir K[-] Digby ran to [- - -] and then question the Brahman and had answers that put his mind at rest. Presently the Brahman closed his book and as he did so the shape vanished. You yourself at that seance at Mrs Wriedt's, when I first spoke to you heard the voice, of one who was a [?] dead woman, [-] a [-] friend, and who gave you proof of identity, and yet [-] she [-] Sir K[-] Digby's lady or it seemed knew that she had [-] so wide and [-. - -] soul and object [- -] decided, so [-] by [-], or by [-], and all things are dreams and [-] like. The Cabalists have a method of creating a mental image of an angel in other shapes, by considering the first letter of the name [-] head, and the last letter [-] feet, and giving to the [-] the shapes [- - - - -] letters, [-] at the head let us say must correspond to the sun and [- -] and lion, how I represent it, what this magic [- - - -], and so on. It was very

much like the child's game, where one player draws the head and folds down the paper, and hands it to the second player who then draws her a shoulder and so on [— — — — — — — —]. It is not more difficult and perhaps more effective and [— — —] loss of suggestion, giving it the qualities you require, as Ochorowicz [?] has done in D — [sic] for these qualities will draw some similar [?] soul. In fact we would never [—] it [—] from you or would be compelled to terrify you and perhaps kill you as we used to do with the more inexperienced and mischievous conjurers, were it not that your mind has grown [—], so full [—] images of all kinds, that you have become almost incapable of hearing and seeing us. We shall certainly — [—] certain characteristics of your experiments — be very [?] careful that nobody [—] rend the veil.

VII

Many of us pass on but the possessors of themselves in a single climatic [?] moment [— —] spoken of, [—] in the world which she [—] opens [—] many [—] but is hidden from her thought. I am of those who feeling their imperfections risk losing our [sic] identity by plunging [?] into [?] the human sea. Your senses become ours for more than one mind can look and [—] and see and hear in its one body, and by showing [?] us [?] your desires, we can once more [—], ~~[once come in contact]~~ and escaping from [—] come close again to accident and event. We can even meet in your bodies,

which are bodies [- - - -], and we can amend old errors in ourselves. Our [- - -] your mind and body when your conscious mind is least clear and [-], we can deceive by the shuffling of cards, [-] you have [-] your hands or [- -] of chance, and when we would [-] ourselves [- - -] we [-] yourselves. [Some two lines crossed out] [- - - -], as in all this you have been driven out of sight. We [-] before the eyes of St Thomas [- - -] as if [- - -] are the blasphemous [?] and obscene speech [- - -] the gentle lips of [-] women, and we are the [-] and voices [- -] sinners. We are the unconscious as you say or as I prefer to say the your [sic] animal [?] spirits formed from the will, and moulded by the images of Spiritus Mundi. I know all and all but all you know, we have been over the same books - I have shared in your joys and sorrows and yet it is only because I am your opposite, your antithesis because I am all things furthest from your intellect and your will, that I alone am your Interlocutor. What was Christ himself but the interlocutor of the Pagan world, [one line crossed out] which had long murmured in his ear, at moments of self abasement and death, and thereby summoned.

VIII

Yet do not doubt that I was also Leo Africanus the traveller, [-] though I have found it necessary, [- - - - -] to renew [?] [-] my knowledge of self through your eyes and through the eyes of others, [- - - -] through the eyes of

those, who are not conscious of ever having heard my name. I can still remember [- -, -] many [-] cities, and I still [- - - -] I know [-] Rome and speak [-] languages, and come [- - - -] I could still write my Arab tongue. [One line crossed out] Yet even this may not seem true enough, for [?] you could say that I [- - -] some scholar's mind though [- -] a faculty can be carried from one mind to another like a number or a geometrical [?] form.

Leo Africanus

To Leo Africanus

I am not convinced that in this letter there is one sentence that has come from beyond my own imagination but I will not [- - -] phrase. The morning I began it I found my mind [-] a blank though I had prefaced many thoughts. I could remember nothing except that I intended to begin with an analysis of the axiom that one could not seek an unknown cause, till one has exhausted all the known causes. I wrote [- - - -], line [space left] page [space left] and finding that these pages were but a plea for solitude I remembered that an image that gave [- - - - - - - - - - -] solitude. At one other moment I feel the [- - - - - - - - - - -], - - - -] argument is [-]. Yet I think this is [- - - -] dreamed I [-] in some form or other he may [- -], if you have influenced me it has been less to arrange my thoughts. I am [- -] to [-] my [-], even [-] believing

that I could [-] keep [-] and influence by avoiding those trains of argument and didactic [- - - - -]. I have been conscious of no sudden illumination - nothing has surprised me, and I have not had any of those dreams, which in the past have persuaded me of some spiritual presence. Yet I am confident now as always that spiritual beings if they cannot write and speak can always listen. I can still put my difficulties.¹⁵

¹⁵ Although in the Appendices I have not drawn on published work, I should explain that in my transcription of 'Leo Africanus' I did take into account the short extracts from this manuscript in Richard Ellmann's Yeats: The Man and the Masks (pp. 200-04). Unlike Ellmann, however, I have not corrected Yeats's syntax, and I have never substituted a word for another. As I said in the 'Note on Appendices' (p. 235), I believe that the accuracy of the transcriptions is of paramount importance. Moreover, I should note that I frequently consulted Arnold Goldman's transcription of this manuscript, which he generously shared with me.

APPENDIX C: 1

The Poet and the Actress

(extracts)

The Poet.

I have just returned from the city of Fez and have in this box a mask, which was made for you by the artists modelling in continual consultation with the poets of the city. You will wear it at my next play.

The Actress.

Yes my friend let us talk of the théâtre. There are going to be different plays and a different playhouse it seems. You will have grown tired of the theatre before it comes, and I shall have grown too old for anything but Juliet's nurse, so let us discuss it. We are impartial. I may even come to understand why the poets and artists of Fez have sent me that mask.

The Poet.

I see that even this - a supreme compliment coming from such illustrious artists, has not convinced you, and yet there are every [sic] signs of change. [...] The world having brought forth the realistic theatre to her lover science, is about to bear a child to her husband philosophy. He was indignant but he forgave her though he has not made up his mind what he is going to do with his illegitimate son. [...]

The Actress.

[...] But why are you so anxious to turn out realists - I have always tried to be as real as possible in my acting.

The Poet.

I wish to have the stage itself real, though it must always suggest a dream. I would not disguise the real properties, and the real light and shadow of the stage and I would recognise the reality of the actor so much, that I would put him against some plain unbroken surface that will display every movement. I would not allow any bad landscape painting to compete with him. I would not drive player and stage out of sight in the delusion that I can copy some imaginary scene exactly, or that it would be worth doing if I could. It is that attempt which only began when the enthusiasm of the Italian Renaissance for painting got into the theatre a wholly different art, and compelled the actors - always impressionable people - to create the picture stage. Once understand that you must use what is in front of you, the light and shadow of sun or lamp, and not painted light and shadow, the architecture of the stage, and not Mr 'So and so's' garden walk who realised when he was twenty five that he would never sell a picture, once prefer the beauty and expressiveness of the actor's mind and body to their suppression in mimicry as do the clerk or lawyer whose life has been obedience to mechanical habit, and all will become powerful and beautiful. Player, playwright, decorator, would at once discover that they are doing what they had always longed for. [...]

The Actress.

Well, I will admit that I am annoyed when I have to play

a slut or a touselled hoyden. A good many men have told me that I am charming. Next time I play a queen for you you may not perhaps compel me to make up dark, which does not in the least become my blond hair, and all because you are such a realist in spite of your principles, that you wanted me to appear sunburnt.

The Poet.

You have forgotten the mask.

The Actress.

So you take away with one hand what you give with the other — but I forgot we shall both be dead before a theatre exists such as you describe, and till that day comes I will do as I like. But I wish you would explain to me why I am not to make my face as expressive as possible.

The Poet.

You ask that because you have been so admirable in those plays of the new scientific kind. Now those plays, like all admirable art — and I admit that even mimicry can be admirable mimicry — are the result of battle, but I want to show you another battle which has the irresistible charm for a good fighter that it can never be won, the battle will realise itself.

The Actress.

Have I been taking part in a battle?

The Poet.

Do we not call Strin^dberg a woman hater and did not he call Ibsen a male bluestocking, and do not you call him a feminist, and then think of Mr Galsworthy's convictions. They are overpowering. They weigh upon us like a nightmare

— I have even heard two girls during one of his plays discussing the obvious offence of eating chocolates in such a serious play. But even the dramatists who have no doctrine, they too have their battle — for they have satire — is not all comedy a battle, a sham fight often, but still a battle. Now the art I [— —] is also a battle but it takes place in the depths of the soul and one of the antagonists does not wear a shape known to the world or speak a mortal tongue. It is the struggle of a dream with the world — it is only possible when we transcend circumstance and ourselves, and the greater the contest, the greater the art. [..] When the contest is deliberate we have a moral genius. Dante at the death of Beatrice imagined an ideal mistress, and imagined excited by his banishment, and the violence of his time, an ideal justice. Every artist is a starving man, who creates imaginary drink and food which contents him while the want lasts.

The Actress.

Then he is merely like any reformer, preacher or philanthropist. My friend, I believe you have begun to roll down the hill and that you will end in the ditch with Tolstoy.

The Poet.

Dante did not create the Divine Comedy to reform, bring Beatrice back from the grave, or even in the main to reform his time. If he has wished to reform his time, he would have been a rhetorician, as Milton was in part. He was himself a violent man full of hatred and of lust, and he

created beauty and justice to gave [sic] peace to his own soul. Guido who was no fastidious moralist remonstrated with Dante for his disordered life after the death of Beatrice [...]. The beauty he created was his victory over himself, a sign that he so ordered his thoughts that neither the spectacle of his time, nor of his own life could break his peace. I know no writer, whose life is known to us, either because of the [-] of the record, or the greatness and plainness of the events; where one cannot discover this contest. The men of tragic genius give us not only their ideal vision, but the reality that excited it, but there are others, Keats for instance, who gave us the vision only. Keats, the son of a livery stable keeper, reading Greek in translation, kept out of the luxurious world by his obscurity and his lack of training, creates the vision of luxury and of Greece and alters the history and the direction of our poetry. Can you not see him like a boy with his face glued to the glass window of a sweet shop. We can see it in the few people of creative power we know intimately. [...]

The Actress

I understand that art is the expression, of an ideal — all the old writers used to say that though we have got tired of the word, but I do not understand this contest. I think art is just our pursuit of happiness [...]. I do not think there can be much happiness about thoughts that come out of such a battle as this with the fear of death. Why not say that Synge was merely trying to make a beautiful thing.

The Poet.

Those who try to create beautiful things without this battle in the soul are mere imitators, because we can only become conscious of a thing by comparing it with its opposite. The two real things we have are our natures and the circumstance that surrounds us. We need in both a violent antithesis, nor do I believe art has anything to do with happiness. When we say we are happy we mean that we are doing all kinds of pleasant things, that we have forgotten all painful things. The end of art is ecstasy and that cannot exist without pain. It is a sudden sense of power and of peace that comes when we have before our mind's eye a group of images, which obey us, which leave us free, and which satisfy the needs of our soul. But we must believe in it and if we left out a single painful fact, we would be unable to believe in those images. [..] It is the business of the intellect to call forth, to create the antagonist. [..]

The Actress.

I saw Mr Shaw's 'Candida' last night. There was a poet there who shudders to the depths of his soul because he sees his sweetheart cutting onions. I had always thought a poet was like that, that everything moved him, and all commonplace things can be the subject of poets. That he was just like the rest of us, only more emotional.

The Poet.

Do you know any great poet, or great writer who is easily moved?

The Actress.

Well now that I think of it, I have found all poets, great or small, exceedingly blasé. It has done more for my chastity even than my knowledge of their unfaithfulness. When they have paid me compliments I have wondered if they were laughing at me. Even you (my friend,) wish to cover my face with a mask.

The Poet.

You will acknowledge at once that bad poets and the bad musicians and bad novelists are full of charming illusions. They are like statesmen and founders of great businesses, perpetually deceiving themselves and others. They are in fact men of action, and all men of action are kept from contemplation by an egregious belief in life. They believe in happiness, in love, in money, in progress [...]. They have an immense popularity, but everywhere the poet in his way, and the realist in his way, is their enemy. The realist shows the pain they are trying to forget, and the tragic poet shows the pain side by side with ecstasy. In this perpetual fermentation of their happiness, they turn from the realist with terror, and refuse to the tragic artist even the pain that is the price of his ecstasy. If the poet were emotional he would not endure the vision created by his intellect long enough to attain to certainty. He must not feel that the intellect has shown him reality. He must be able to see reality without flinching.

The Actress.

The realist should therefore help to bring the Theatre of Beauty — which I confess — I desire as much as you do.

The Poet.

Yes — for a hundred years we have had the rose pink sentimentalist created by the press of the linen drapers, and by a priesthood that the linen drapers pay for. All painful things have been hidden and now the reaction has come. There is a passion for reality all through Europe. The religious men created a false faith and they have lost the world, and the popular writers have created a false beauty, and they are losing the world.

The Actress.

The first piece is over, and I shall have to go on the stage. I really believe you have convinced me, but convinced or not I shall never wear that mask and you can pack it straight back to Fez.

The Poet.

There is no mask. I have never been in Fez.

APPENDIX C: 2

Clairvoyant Search for Will

(extracts)

The only will made by Lane which could be discovered, was some years ago. He spoke to several people before his last voyage of another will, mentioned alterations which he meant to make and the executors he would appoint. These persons believed that he had already made this second will. The first will, made during the irritation caused by the rejection of his proposed Gallery in Dublin, left the pictures originally intended for Dublin, to London, to go towards the foundation of a permanent gallery of modern painting. Lady Gregory hoped that the later will would give them back to Dublin. Every possible search seems to have been made and Mrs Shine believed that nothing more could be done. Lady Gregory, who was staying at Lindsay House, went upstairs, laid down upon her bed, and asked that Lane's spirit should reveal to her where the will was. She then made her mind a blank. The thought came suddenly into her mind that it would be found in his desk in the Dublin National Gallery. She wrote to Dublin to have a search made and received an unwitnessed codicil which was found in the desk by the present temporary director (Strickland). This codicil left the pictures back to Dublin on the condition that the Corporation made a building suitable for the purpose within five years. The codicil appointed Lady Gregory executor

and said that she was to be solely responsible for the decision as to the suitability of site and building. This codicil, however, was not legal, though Lady Gregory believed that, as no opposition is likely from private legatees, or from the English National Gallery in whose charge the pictures now are, it can be carried into effect. It was, however, important to find if a more detailed and binding will had been made. Lady Gregory asked me to make an attempt to find this will by psychic means. I am now engaged on that investigation. On Sunday, June 13, I had a meeting with the automatic writer whom I call Miss X.¹ I had spoken of the matter to her a couple of days before and she had already obtained, while by herself, an automatic drawing and some obscure sentences in Greek which seemed to imply that her controls were aware of my question. Copies of these papers are on my file. On June 13, we obtained the following automatic script. I should say, before passing on, that Miss X. has never met Sir Hugh Lane, and knows nothing either of Ireland or of Greek. She is a pleasant young woman, well-mannered and of good taste, but without learning of any kind. Her age is about twenty-five, and she is, of course, not a professional medium. 'William Power wait and listen. I am sent to see if I may help in this matter. I will go and see if I can find H. L. and if maybe bring a message but he is still enclosed and may not be able to speak yet.' (I ask if what I say is heard and understood for I am

¹Elizabeth Radcliffe.

afraid that it may be as hard for them to hear what we say as for us to hear them.) Do not imagine that we cannot see or understand here. (There is then a pause.) The time is long for he may only send one word and he searches for a conclusive one. (Another pause.) He has written down one word for me to copy: εὑρηνα.¹ (I ask if he can speak plainer later on.) Perhaps I know not, it depends on which way he unfolds. (I ask if he could speak to me through another medium more easily.) That I cannot tell you. (I ask who the communicator is and if Hugh Lane had known him.) No, I thought you might have heard of me there are bonds. (I say that I have known two Powers, but neither was a William Power.) Thomas Moore. (I ask if the bond was through Moore.) Yes. (I ask if he is the guide of someone present.) No I have not written before. (I ask if he will help in the important matter we are inquiring about. I tell him that it is very important to Ireland.) Why yes, you have our goodwill but practical help is hindered for reasons which I cannot explain as you have no words for certain constitutions and contingencies. (I have searched for William Power — there is no mention of him in the eight-volume edition of Moore's Life and Letters, though there are three letters to a James Power who was Thomas Moore's music publisher. I find, however, by referring to a volume of letters from Moore to this publisher, published in 1854, that the imprint on the first volume of Moore's melodies

¹Correct accent εὑρηνα (a thing found, godsent).

which was published in Dublin is 'published by James and William Power'. William Power may have been a brother of James Power. The Greek word εὑρημα (accent is wrong) means 'a discoverer',² 'a mindfall' [?], 'a finding' — these are the meanings given in the dictionary. I suppose that it means that we have discovered all that there is. I have noticed with this particular medium that the spirits have a difficulty to inflect. They can give long and precise messages in Greek or Latin, dove-tailing the sentences together, leaving out words and putting a row of dots instead, but that when they come to single words, they cannot modify them. It is as though they had to find every sentence somewhere — every word somewhere — and give it as they find it. I cannot explain this. But there is an analogous case which has been studied by Professor Richet.³

Next day, Monday, I went to the rooms of the London Spiritualists Alliance and asked the editor of 'Light' and another friend to recommend me a medium. They told me that Mrs Cannock was to give clairvoyant descriptions at the Alliance that afternoon. I came back to the Alliance at about five minutes to three, the clairvoyant descriptions were to begin at three. I found Mrs Cannock sitting, waiting in a room next the large room where the descriptions were to be given. She is a stout, middle-aged woman. She turned

²Apparently Yeats means 'a discovery'.

³Dr Charles Richet (1850-1935), President of the SPR (1895) and author of Traité de Métapsychique (1923). In 'Quelques Observations de Clairvoyance' he dealt with 'the writing of phrases, sentences, even of pages of Greek by a

her vague eyes upon me before I had said anything, gave a slight shiver and said: 'A drowned man has come into the room with you, he wishes to speak to you, he has wished for some days to do so. He also wished to speak to his brother. His death brought some work or business to an end, it has brought many people to a stop.' My two friends at the Alliance said that they had merely told Mrs Cannock that I wished to consult her about a dead friend. I made an appointment with her for five o'clock the following afternoon. I saw her as appointed. I brought with me a letter of Hugh Lane's. She didn't look at it, of course, but thrust her finger inside the envelope as my influence might cling about the envelope. By touching the letter itself, she got away from this. Her first impression was of a man who was lame from the hip down. She asked if the man I was inquiring about was stout. I said no. She then said that she saw two men together. Then suddenly, without any suggestion from me, she saw the side of a vessel, then described a man with deep-set eyes and long features; he was more dark than fair, he was very delicate. Then she went back to the vessel. It was a large vessel with boats about. The man I was inquiring about was in the wrong position to escape, he was not quite conscious of going down. In any case, he was a man who would not push. He could not have been saved,

person who had written these Greek phrases in a state of somnambulism', a certain 'Madame X'. See Journal of the SPR, 12 (1905-6), 91-92, and 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E[lizabeth] R[adcliffe]' in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper (London 1976), n. 86 to pp. 167-68.

he had a sudden blow on the back of the head. She repeated more than once that he was a man of very nervous disposition, painfully narrow, but a very fine character. (Throughout I am copying notes made at the moment.) Then she asked me did he leave a sort of business. Were there two people who should benefit under his will. He was anxious that some arrangement should be come to. There would be a loss if his affairs were wound up now. (I had been careful to avoid the word 'will', but I made inquiries about the 'arrangement'.) [...] He had made another will, but had torn it up. He had merely made a draft of it, intending to make a proper legal will on his return to England, but he believed that the Trustees would take his wishes into consideration, and he did not believe there would be much dispute about the matter. She repeated, 'he thinks that they will uphold his wishes' or some such words. 'He thinks that he has left sufficient indications to go by'. I said he sent me a message I believe on Sunday, but it was only one word. She said, was it 'hold fast'. I said, no. She then said, it was not English - was it Latin. I said, no, not Latin. She then said Greek. I told her that was right. She then asked if there was something about noble in it. (It is just possible that she may have got on the track of an automatic drawing made by Miss X. the day before I questioned Miss X. This drawing was certainly the celebration of the victory of a soul. I do not discuss it now as it would be a by-path.) The child voice then went on saying that the shipwreck had been a fearful shock. He finds it hard to remember. It was a great shock not because of what he

suffered himself, but because of what he saw others suffer. He was not the kind of man to try and save himself. She then asked me if I knew anything of another man who was there apparently — a tall gentleman with a beard and bald on the top of his head. (I said I did not. I made this out from sentences scrawled in my note-book — in some few cases, they are only key words to remind me of what the medium said.)

On June 16th between 11.30 and 12.15, I had a seance with Mrs Herbine. We were sitting for five minutes or so before we heard the faint whispering voice of a control, Dr Coulter. The room as usual with Mrs Herbine was fully lighted. There were the same fruit and flowers to help the spirit in his manifestation. Mrs Herbine is the only medium known to me who uses this medieval method. Unlike my experience with her before, the voice did not come from close to the fruit and flowers which were upon my right, but seemingly from the air, between Mrs Herbine and myself.

[...] I got the impression that he [Dr Coulter] was feeling his way. I could not delay for psychical research, and said straight out — I want your help to find a lost will.. He said, 'Oh, that was what you were talking of and it was Hugh Lane's will'. Had he been trying to remember something which he had known clearly before the confusion of partial materialisation had obscured his consciousness, or was he fishing. It was like fishing, but at a later interview, his knowledge was precise, and precise where he had no help from me, and where Mrs Herbine could have known

nothing. He spoke very rapidly now, and when I made my notes after the seance, I found it impossible to record everything or with verbal accuracy. He went twice to Lane with questions from me and while he was away, Mrs Herbine's brother Jimmy, took his place and talked in general terms of my past incarnations, promising to be more precise another day. I have lived in ancient Ireland and in Norway and in the East. When Dr Coulter returned, he said that Lane had intended to make a detailed will on his return from his last journey, that we had all that there was — a draft about some private bequests to his sister and to others. I said, 'No, we have a codicil dealing with public bequests.' It was now that he made his second visit to Lane, but when he came back, he said that Lane thought we have found both — the codicil and a note — neither signed nor witnessed. It was in an envelope and in the same place where we had found the codicil. He thought he had put it into an envelope. Lane did not think it was very important, but he, Dr Coulter, thought it might be important. He said that Lane was vague and possibly distrusted him. He had found it hard to get him to speak. He was not yet free from his earthly life, and was trying to live his old life not understanding that it was over. He would be free, however, in a few days. Dr Coulter would see me again when Lane was free. [...] Next day, I got a wire from Mrs Herbine asking me to come again. I saw her about 8 on June 17th. Dr Coulter was now much more decided. He said that the note or memorandum, as he now called it, was in Dublin. It was written on an ordinary

piece of paper. Lane thought he had put this piece of paper into an envelope. If he did not, it was among a lot of other papers. He then went on to say that Lane had distrusted two people in his Dublin office — one in a prominent position, and the other an employee. He thought neither of them honest. He then said he distrusted the present head of the gallery, and neither this head, nor the employee would be friendly to Lady Gregory or to myself. The paper should be found before things developed. Lane had contemplated changes in Dublin, and also about pictures, et c., in his London house. He had spoken of this last to Lady Gregory and his sister. He had not been treated well in Dublin. They took what he gave and tried to crowd him out. ('Crowd him out' Mrs Herbine said is a regular Dr Coulter expression and need not be taken therefore as an accurate representation of Lane's thoughts.) Lane is now much better, much quieter and calmer and more amiable. Yesterday he had said that he never cared about these studies, he knew that Yeats had, and Dr Coulter had been compelled to remind him that he himself was now dead and might soon be glad to communicate. [...]

The greatest difficulty in judging communications through mediums or clairvoyants is to separate the communication that one seeks from what is merely dramatic. Only the most literal-minded spiritualist thinks there is no dramatic element, and one school of investigators think that all except the underlying thought itself, is dramatic. I forgot to include among Dr Coulter's remarks (I had made

no note), that Hugh Lane had not communicated before, and that he had told him so, and must either take this as dramatic, or take the interviews through Mrs Cannock or Miss X. as partly dramatic, or I must consider that those earlier interviews were telepathic communications of which Lane was not conscious. It was possible that we should look upon communications from the dead as the communication of thoughts which take a dramatic form upon entering our minds, or if you will, a dream form. Only in the communications which I have received through Miss X. have I found reason to believe that the communicators are exactly what they say they are. Both Dr Coulter's story and that of Mrs Cannock may be telepathy from my unconscious mind. I have confidence alone in the one obscure Greek word received through Miss X.

APPENDIX D

Note-book of Stainton Moses (1873)

(extracts)

March 30

The spirit communicating with Stainton Moses is
'Doctor'.

'[...] Ask anything that bears on the mission whereon we are sent to you and we shall gladly answer [...]. But we are sent to you the Teacher of God to show to you of His wisdom, to guide you to experience, to lead you into Truth. We are ever at hand to fulfil our work in you. We are with you to protect and keep and guide. We are to you the messengers of the Allwise: the Heralds of Truth. It is yours to receive His holy message, to cherish it and keep it pure, and to guide and lead others [...].'

March 31

How long have you been attached to me?

'I have been with you, friend, from the time when first you began to drink in knowledge. It has been my care to guide the mind and to infuse knowledge into the soul. I guided you in your wanderings amid the labours of the old philosophers and with Philosophus and Prudens infused into you a love of the metaphysical. [...].'

Good Friday

Tell me of yourself. Were you known on earth as a great Teacher?

'[...] Men called me ATHENODORUS.

[...] I was what men called a STOIC: and I taught that man's chiefest happiness rests and ever must rest in following the heaven-sent dictates of reason and nature, the blessed impulses of the spirit who guides the soul. God I regard as the soul of the universe, the informing and energizing SPIRIT who is the motive spring of all. I taught that HE is in and amidst and pervades all nature. [...]

I taught this to all who came to me for Teaching. More especially I taught the young Tiberius, son of the Emperor AUGUSTUS. I had the charge of the young man when his soul was yet pure, whilst angels guarded him and demons of evil had not possessed the intelligence. [...]

You taught Tiberius. Were you then a Roman?

'No, friend. I drew the first breath of earth life at Tarsus. I travelled to extend my mind, to widen my perceptions of men and things in the best school, experience. I came to the court of Augustus and found there a noble spirit presiding over a learned and erudite court. I became influential with Augustus [...]. [...] Yet were not without guidance. SOCRATES had his [daimon] who always attended him. My old master ZENO returned to guide me, as I have since discovered [...].

[...] We knew naught of the advanced science which ye know [...]. We knew of Spirit Influence in the ancient

Oracles [...]. The voice of the Delphic [space left] was in reality the voice of the controlling spirit speaking thro' her whilst her own intelligence was lulled. It was as you call it Trance speaking. [...]

Yes, the efforts made to bring home truth to man are increased at certain times. So it was during the days when I lived among men: so again in the days of dawning light which recall the Reformation of Religion: so now in days when the knowledge of the most high shall be increasingly spread and men shall be awakened from the dream of materialism in which they have long lain.

The history of the world is the history of the struggle between the evil and the good: between God and goodness and ignorance, earthliness, vice and evil, spiritual, mental and corporeal. [...] Then comes the struggle: prolonged, and becoming more bitter as the crisis draws near [...].

[...] And now a great convulsion is taking place among the evil powers. The army of the messengers of God is being massed in greater force: men are being influenced: knowledge is being spread: and the crisis of the struggle is at hand. Fear not for the end! It shall be victory! But fear for the coward hearts who will not endure! Fear for those who turn and flee! Fear for the [...] half-hearted, the vacillating [...].

Aye fear for them; fear not for the cause of GOD'S TRUTH.

[...] Had ye lived on earth in the latter days of Roman Imperial Power when everything spiritual had fled in

horror from steeped in debauchery, sensuality, and all that is base and bad and ye would have known then what the banded powers of darkness can effect. The coldness was the coldness of despair: the darkness was the blackness of the sepulchre. The Body, the Body was all: and the Guardians fled in pain and anguish from a scene which they could not view and whose pangs they could not alleviate. Faithlessness indeed there was, and worse. [...] They laughed at immortality, scorned a future existence, and lived to eat and drink and wallow in the mire: the degraded down-stricken animals that they had made themselves. [...]'

I know. I know! We are impatient: and there is such need for the Gospel you teach. The world so sadly needs it. So directly needs assurance of a future.

'God will give it, is giving it now far far more than you think. In all parts are springing up centres from which the truth of God is being poured into longing hearts, and permeating your thinking minds. There must be many to whom the Gospel which was given of old is satisfying yet, and who therefore need not to seek further into the truth of God [...]. But others there are; receptive souls who have learned what the past can teach and who are thirsting for further knowledge. To these it is given in such measure as the most High sees right. And from them it spreads to others and the Glorious Tidings spread until the day come when we shall be called upon to proclaim them from the mountain top and lo! God's hidden ones shall start up from every valley and lowly place to

be a witness to that which they have heard and known, and the little rills that man has heeded not shall coalesce and the river of God's truth omnipotent in its energy shall flood the earth and sweep away in its resistless course the ignorance and unbelief and folly and sin which now dismay and perplex you. [...]'

This new revelation, is it contradictory of the old? [...]

'Revelation is from God, and that which He reveals at one time cannot contradict that which he has previously revealed seeing that each is, in its kind, a revelation of Divine Truth: but of Truth revealed in proportion to man's necessities and to his capacities. That which seems contradictory is not in the word of God but in the mind of man. Man is not content with the simple message. He gradually overlays it with his glosses, and adulterates it with his deductions. And so as years roll on, it comes to pass that what came from God is in no sense what it was. It has become assimilated to the mind of man, and is contradictory, absurd, and earthly. When then a further revelation comes, instead of fitting it in reasonably, it becomes necessary to overthrow much of the superstruction that has been built on the old foundations, and the work of destruction must precede the work of addition. The Revelations are not contradictory: but it is necessary to destroy man's rubbish before God's Truth can be revealed.'

But if this be God's truth, how is it that it is revealed to so few? that it is so little acceptable to most?

'[...] God's truth in all ages has been given to those who can receive it. [...] God deals with all as they can be dealt with.

He forces none.'

Easter Day, 1873, Bradford.

[Stainton Moses's control is 'Prudens' for a while. Then another spirit communicates and says: 'It is too 1600 years and more since I left this sphere. I lived in Greece and handed on the teaching of my great master Amunius to Porphyry, an eminent pupil'. The new communicator signs his name: 'Plotinus'. At first it seems as if 'Plotinus' is the spirit who starts to speak of the Resurrection of Christ, but then we discover it was 'Doctor', as he signs at the end. 'Doctor' says that the Resurrection of Christ was of the Spirit Body, not the material body: the Resurrection of the material body is a fable.]

'[...] The appearance of Jesus was of the Spirit Body which he was enabled to manifest in tangible form. The earth body never rose. [...] He inherited a Body that was the most perfect ever born into the world and with it a vast store of that power which marked him out amongst mankind. [...]

April 19th, 1873

[The subject is John Dee the Elizabethan, who appeared as a spirit guide in the course of a seance 'last evening'.

John Dee communicates through 'Doctor' and gives information about his life; yet he does not remember the date of his birth. Here ends the first part of the script. The next part is labelled 'Note-book of Stainton Moses, Book II'.]

* * *

Note-book of Stainton Moses

Book II

[This is not very interesting at the beginning. I present here a summary of some basic events. 'Rector' 'reads' books which are in S. M.'s book-case. Then 'Doctor' speaks of the necessity of self-abnegation on the medium's part. 'Rector' speaks of his life on earth. He lived near Rome and had a violent death by drowning. 'Doctor' reappears and says that 'Prudens' will tell S. M. of the metaphysical doctrine to which the latter inclines, 'of that mixture of Platonism, Mysticism and Pantheism which 'Prudens' professed in earth life as Plotinus.' (So 'Prudens' is 'Plotinus'.) Then S. M. asks for some information about 'Mentor', the new spirit that assumes his guardianship. 'Doctor' provides it.]

! ['Mentor'] was an Arabian Philosopher. Abou Hamed Mohamed, better known as ALGAZZALI, the LIGHT of ISLAM and PILLAR of the MOSQUE. He was a wise and learned mystic, versed in the Neo-Platonic Philosophy [...] and the greatest and most erudite of the Arabian Philosophic School [...].

He lived on your earth in the early days of the 11th

century, being born at TOVS in 1058.'

How was he known? I never heard of him.

'As ALGAZZALI [...] which in his language was named GAZZAL. His writings were known to none but Arabians until more than 300 years after his departure from your earth sphere. He was variously known to them as GAZZALI, GHAZAIL, and ALGAZEL. [...]'

[Some pages after we read the Chief ('Imperator', the Head of the 'Imperator Band') will communicate with S. M. through 'Rector'. 'Imperator' will tell S. M. 'of the mission on which [the former] is engaged, of the evidentials which he bears, of the points on which the message which he brings is contradictory of that Gospel which has hitherto been received as the final revelation of the Most High.' The following are interesting fragments of this teaching.]

'Of all classes of our opponents these are the most sad. The Pseudo-scientists who will look at naught save through his [sic] own fog and on his [sic] own terms [...].

To the proud, the arrogant, the wordly, the children of routine and respectability we can say very little. [...]

It is to the receptive souls who know of GOD [...] that we turn with earnest longing. But alas! Too often we find the natural religious instincts which are God-implanted and spirit-nurtured choked and distorted by the cramping influence of a human theology [...]. They [our opponents] are armed at all points against the truth. Do we speak of a revelation of the Great Father? They already have a Revelation which they have decided to be complete.

Do we tell them of its inconsistencies, and point out that it nowhere pretends to what they would assign to it?

They reply to us with stray words from Church formularies, or by an opinion from some person whom they have chosen to consider infallibly inspired. They apply to us a text drawn from some one of the sacred records which was given for a special purpose, and which they imagine to be of universal application.

Do we point to our credentials and to the 'miracles' which attest our mission even as they attested that of those whom we influenced of old?

They tell us that the age of such miracles is gone, and that only the Inspired long centuries ago could work such wonders. They tell us that the Devil, whom they have imaged for themselves, has power to counterfeit God's work and they consign us and our mission to darkness and antagonism to GOD and goodness.

They would believe, and help us, but that we are of the Devil. We must be because in the Bible it is said that false [...] spirits will come: and so we must be the deceivers. It must be so, for do we not deny the Son of God? [...]

Religion to be worthy of the name must have its two sides, the one pointing to God, the other to man. [...]

Blind faith cannot be substitute for reasoning trust. For the faith is faith that either has ground for its trust or not. [...]

[...] If the faith have no ground to rest on, we need

not further labour to shew it baseless and untrustworthy.

[...]' Signed by 'Imperator'.]

Sunday, June 15th, 1873. Home.

'[...] We are discoursing of the source of the teaching which we give, and of the reasonable grounds on which that teaching should be judged.'

[There follows a paraphrase of 'Imperator's' previous statement that religion must have two sides, 'the one pointing to God, the other to man'. The spirits continue with their teaching.]

'[...] This mortal existence is but a fragment of life. Its deeds and their results remain when the body is dead. The ramifications of wilful sin have to be followed out, and its results remedied in sorrow and shame. The consequences of deeds of good are similarly permanent, and precede the pure soul and draw around it influences which welcome and aid it in the spheres. [...]

[...] Give no blind adherence to any teaching that is not commended to you by reason. [...]' [Signed by 'Imperator' and 'Rector'.]

[S. M. asks if all this does not contradict Christian belief. He receives the following answer: 'No doubt it seems to the unprepared spirit new and destructive of older forms of faith', but 'we must clear away much rubbish'. S. M. says that although the teaching of the spirits is good and pure, it is anti-Christian. The next section is labelled 'Part II'.]

Part II

[At some point the spirits express their wish to warn S. M. of the impending crisis.]

'We will consult, friend, and warn you: but it may be possible for us to tell you exactly, only at the last.'

Is all this spiritual disturbance indicative of a special struggle?

'Yea, verily: it is the first muttering of a conflict dire and dread[ful?] between good and evil, between the powers of light and of darkness. It has ever been so at certain seasons. It is so now specially. If ye could read the story of your world with spirit-sight ye could see that there have been ever periodic battles between the opposing forces. There have come seasons when the low and undeveloped spirits predominate. Especially are such seasons those succeeding great wars among you. Many rude spirits are withdrawn prematurely from the body. They pass amongst us before they are prepared: at the time of their departure from you they are in evil state, angry, bloodthirsty, and they do mischief great and long in their sphere-life.

Such is an epoch that reaches you now.

Again, be wary. Farewell. — D[oc]tor'

May 10th. V. G. [?]

Tell me more of this. These spirits?

'Nothing is more dangerous than for souls to be rudely severed from their bodily habitation: and to be launched

unto the spheres with angry passions stirred, and blood-thirsty revengeful feelings dominant. It is bad that any should be dismissed from the stage of earth life suddenly, and before the band be naturally severed. It is for this reason that all destruction of bodily life is rude and foolish: rude as betokening a barbarous ignorance of spirit-life and progress in the hereafter: foolish, as releasing an undeveloped, angry spirit from trammels of earth and enduing it with extended capacity for mischief. [...]

[Now the 'discussion' is about crime, prisons and punishment. It is foolish to deal with offenders of the human law by putting them in prison: 'Ye should teach your offenders'. Prisoners should not be executed, for their spirits pass to the hereafter full of vengeance, and there work against the human race, the good spirits, and God. But God does not rejoice in inflicting punishment, He is not 'bitter' and 'unmitigable'.]

'God - our GOOD GOD, LOVING, TENDER, PITIFUL - delighting in punishing with cruel hand his ignorantly erring sons. Base fable! Base and foolish fancy! Product of man's cruel heart, of man's rude undeveloped mind. [...]

Yes, friend, your jails and your legalized murder, your whole dealings with such offenders are based on ignorant error.

Your wars and your wholesale murderings are even more fearful. Ye settle your differences with your neighbours who should be your friends, by arraying against each other masses of spirits - friend, we see not their bodies; we

care only for the spirit that is temporarily clothed with those human atoms - and these spirits ye excite to full pitch of anger and so ye launch them rudely severed from their earth body into the spirit life. Ye inflame their passions and give them full vent. Vengeful, debased, cruel, earth-bound spirits throng around your earth-sphere, and incite your debased spirits who are yet incarn[at]ed to similar deeds of cruelty and lust and sin. And this for the satisfying of ambition, for a passing fancy, for an idle princely whim, for lack of something else to occupy a king. [...]

Ah! to spirit eye there is no more fearful sight than those dens of wickedness and impurity where the evil men gather to steep their senses in oblivion, to excite the lustful and sensual passions of their debased bodies, to consort with the degraded and the impure, and to offer themselves the ready prey of the basest and worst spirits who hover around and find their gratification in living over again their bodily lives. [...]

[The last interesting entry is that of 'Plotinus'.]

'[...] After my release from the body [...] I presented myself at times at the Delphic [space left] and described my abode in a sphere where friendship and love to the SUPREME were my perpetual joy. [...]

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

YEATS (EDITIONS)

Autobiographies, London: Macmillan, 1955

The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, second edition, London: Macmillan, 1950

Essays and Introductions, London: Macmillan, 1969

Explorations, London: Macmillan, 1962

Ideas of Good and Evil, New York: Russell and Russell, 1967

If I Were Four-and-Twenty, Dublin: The Cuala Press, 1940

Memoirs: Autobiography - First Draft; Journal, transcribed and edited by Denis Donoghue, London: Macmillan, 1972

Mythologies, London: Macmillan, 1959

Per Amica Silentia Lunae, London: Macmillan, 1918

Selected Criticism, edited with an introduction and notes by A. Norman Jeffares, London: Pan Books, 1976.
(Originally published by Macmillan, 1964.)

Selected Poetry, edited with an introduction and notes by A. Norman Jeffares, London: Pan Books, 1974. (Originally published by Macmillan, 1962.)

Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, collected and edited by J. P. Frayne, 2 vols, London: Macmillan, 1970, 1975

The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, edited by P. Allt and R. K. Alspach, New York: Macmillan, 1957

A Vision, second edition, London: Macmillan 1937; reissued with corrections 1962

Wheels and Butterflies, London: Macmillan, 1934

W. B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections, edited by E. H. Mikhail, 2 vols, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977

CORRESPONDENCE

Finneran, R. J., George Mills Harper, and W. M. Murphy, eds, Letters to W. B. Yeats, 2 vols, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977

Harper, George Mills, ed., W. B. Yeats and W. T. Horton: The Record of an Occult Friendship, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980

Wade, Allan, ed., The Letters of W. B. Yeats, London:
Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954

YEATS'S SPIRITUALISTIC PAPERS

The following writings are available on microfilm at the
National Library of Ireland:

'Clairvoyant Search for Will', P 7535

'Leo Africanus', P 7550

'Note-book of Stainton Moses', P 7540

'The Poet and the Actress', P 7550

Records of Seances, P 7535, P 7537 and P 7538

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jochum, K. P. S., W. B. Yeats: A Classified Bibliography
of Criticism, Illinois: Dawson, 1978

Wade, Allan, A Bibliography of the Writings of W. B. Yeats,
second edition, revised, London: Rupert Hart-Davis,
1958

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES

Bergonzi, Bernard, The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the
Scientific Romances, Manchester: The University Press,
1961

Bloom, Harold, Yeats, New York: Oxford University Press,
1970

Bodkin, Maud, 'The Image of the Divine Birth', Studies of
Type-Images in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy,
London: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 63-108

Bradford, C. B., Yeats at Work, Carbondale and Edwardsville:
Southern Illinois University Press, 1965

Brown, Forman, 'Mr Yeats and the Supernatural', Sewanee
Review, 33, no. 3 (July 1925), 323-30

Bunting, Basil, 'Yeats Recollected', Agenda, 12, no. 2
(Summer 1974), 36-47

Cowell, Raymond, ed., Critics on Yeats, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971

Donoghue, Denis, and J. R. Mulryne, eds, An Honoured Guest: New Essays on W. B. Yeats, London: Arnold, 1965

Ellmann, Richard, The Identity of Yeats, second edition, London: Faber and Faber, 1964

———, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, second edition, London: Faber and Faber, 1961

Friar, Kimon, The Stony Eyes of the Medusa [Τά Πέτρινα Μάτια τῆς Μεδούσας], Athens: Kedros, 1981

Goldman, Arnold, 'Yeats, Spiritualism, and Psychical Research', in Yeats and the Occult, edited by George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies Series, London: Macmillan, 1976, pp. 108-29

Harper, George Mills, and John S. Kelly, 'Preliminary Examination of the Script of E[lizabeth] R[adcliffe]', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 130-71

Harper, George Mills, '"A Subject of Investigation": Miracle at Mirebeau', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 172-189

———, Yeats's Golden Dawn, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974

———, 'Yeats's Occult Papers', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 1-10

Hirschberg, Stuart, 'An Encounter with the Supernatural in Yeats's "The Spirit Medium"', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 311-16

Hone, Joseph, W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939, London: Macmillan, 1942

Husain-Itrat, The Mystical Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century, Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1948

Iliopoulos, Spyridon, 'On the Concept of the Anti-self; on the Natural and Spiritual Orders: Two Eccentric Theses Dictated by Yeats — or by his Daemon' [Περί 'Αντι-εαυτοῦ· περί φυσικῆς καί Πνευματικῆς Τάξεως: δύο 'Εκκεντρικὲς Θέσεις τοῦ Γέντις ἢ τοῦ Δαίμονος], Amaxa [Ἀμαξά] 1, nos 3-4 (December 1983), 18-20

———, 'The Fall of the House of Usher and Saint's Day: Isolation and Self-destruction', unpublished M. A. paper, University of Warwick, 1978

Iliopoulos, Spyridon, 'Introductory Note to "The Symbolism of Poetry" by W. B. Yeats' [Εἰσαγωγικὸ Σημείωμα στὸν "Συμβολισμό τῆς Ποίησης" τοῦ W. B. Yeats], To Mikro Dentro [Τὸ Μικρὸ Δέντρο], 1, no. 3 (February 1982), 32-33

———, '"The Medium's Mouth": Mediumship, Spiritualism, Psychical Research, and the Poetry of W. B. Yeats', unpublished M. A. paper, University of Warwick, 1978

———, Mythologies and Visions Μυθολογίες καὶ Ὁράματα, Athens: Plethron, 1983

———, 'Vaughan's Treatment of Self-transformation in a Selection of his Religious Lyrics', unpublished M. A. paper, University of Warwick, 1978

Ivens, Michael, 'Yeats: the Faustian Quest', Foylibra, Foyles Bookshop Magazine (December 1971), 21-22

Jeffares, A. Norman, A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, London: Macmillan, 1968

Keith, W. J., 'Yeats's Double Dream', Modern Language Notes 76, no. 8 (December 1961), 710-15

Melchiori, Giorgio, The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the Work of W. B. Yeats, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960

Moore, John Rees, Masks of Love and Death: Yeats as Dramatist, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971

Moore, Virginia, The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats's Search for Reality, New York: Macmillan, 1954

Mulryne, J. R., 'The Last Poems', in Yeats: Last Poems, edited by Jon Stallworthy, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968

Murphy, W. M., 'Psychic Daughter, Mystic Son, Sceptic Father', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 11-26

Olney, James, 'The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 27-54

———, The Rhizome and the Flower: The Perennial Philosophy - Yeats and Jung, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1980

———, 'W. B. Yeats's Daimonic Memory', Sewanee Review, 85 (1977), 583-603

- Ong, W. J., 'A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives', in 20th Century Literary Criticism, edited by David Lodge, London: Longman Group, 1972, pp. 498-508
- Orwell, George, 'W. B. Yeats', in The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970, pp. 311-17
- Perloff, Marjorie, Rhyme and Meaning in the Poetry of Yeats, The Hague: Mouton, 1970
- Picchi, Fernando, Esoterismo e Magia nelle Poesie di W. B. Yeats, Firenze: Nardin, 1977
- Plakotari, Alexandra, 'The Poetry of W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)', [Η Ποίηση του W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)], Epoches [Εποχές], no. 32 (December 1965), 37-43
- Raine, Kathleen, 'Hades Wrapped in Cloud', in Yeats and the Occult, pp. 80-107
- Skelton, Robin, and Ann Saddlemyer, eds, The World of W. B. Yeats: Essays in Perspective, Victoria: Adelphi Bookshop, 1965
- Stallworthy, Jon, Between the Lines: W. B. Yeats's Poetry in the Making, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963
- , 'The Second Coming', Agenda, 9 no. 4 — 10 no. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1971/72), 24-33
- , ed., Yeats: Last Poems, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968
- Tuohy, Frank, Yeats, London: Macmillan, 1976
- Tynan, Katharine, Twenty-five Years: Reminiscences, New York: Devin Adair, 1913
- Unterecker, John, A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats, London: Thames and Hudson, 1959
- Ure, Peter, Yeats the Playwright: A Commentary on Character and Design in the Major Plays, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963
- , Yeats, Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963
- Webster, Brenda S., Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974
- Whitaker, T. R., Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964

Ziolkowski, Theodore, The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967

OCCULTISM, SPIRITUALISM, AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Blavatsky, H. P., The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy, fourth edition, 6 vols, Adyar, Madra, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938

Crowley, Aleister, The Complete Astrological Writings, edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant, London, 1976

Cummins, Geraldine, Unseen Adventures: An Autobiography Covering Thirty-four Years of Work in Psychical Research, London: Rider, 1951

———, 'W. B. Yeats and Psychical Research', Occult Review, 66, no. 2 (April 1939), 132-39

Dooley, Anne, Every Wall a Door: Exploring Psychic Surgery and Healing, Corgi Library of Psychic Exploration, London: Corgi Books, 1975

Fodor, Nandor, Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science, New York: University Books, 1966

Fortune, Dion, The Mystical Qabalah, London and Tonbridge: Ernest Benn, 1935

Gaynor, Frank, Dictionary of Mysticism, London: Wildwood House, 1974

Hints on Sitting with Mediums, revised edition, London: Society for Psychical Research, undated

Lutyens, Emily, Candles in the Sun, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957

Moore, W. Usborne, Glimpses of the Next State: The Education of an Agnostic, London: Watts, 1911

'Mr W. B. Yeats a Spiritualist', Light, 33 (November 15, 1913), 549

Myers, F. W. H., Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death, edited by Susy Smith, New York: University Books, 1961

Nelson, G. K., Spiritualism and Society, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969

Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research: Principal Contents of Vols I-LIV, London: Society for Psychical Research, undated

Salter, W. H., Trance Mediumship: An Introductory Study of Mrs Piper and Mrs Leonard, London: Society for Psychical Research, 1950

Skultans, Vieda, Intimacy and Ritual: A Study of Spiritualism, Mediums and Groups, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974

Smythies, J. R., ed., Science and ESP, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967

Thomas, C. Drayton, 'The Modus Operandi of Trance Communication According to Descriptions Received Through Mrs Osborne Leonard', Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 38 (1928-29), 49-100

Webb, James, The Occult Underground, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1974

Wilson, Colin, The Occult, Frogmore, St Albans, Herts: Mayflower Books, 1973

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Bozonis, G. A., Aesthetic Questions [Αἰσθητικοί Προβληματισμοί], Athens: Gregores, 1982

Jacobi, Jolande, Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, translated by Ralph Manheim, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959

Jung, C. G., Analytical Psychology: its Theory and Practice, the Tavistock Lectures, forwarded by E. A. Bennet, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976

———, Alchemical Studies, translated by R. F. C. Hull, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967 (vol. 13 of Collected Works)

———, The Archetype of Totalitarianism [Τό 'Αρχέτυπο του 'Ολοκληρωτισμού], translated by Sophia Antzaka, Athens, 1972

———, The Collected Works, translated by R. F. C. Hull, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, 19 vols, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953-78

- Jung, C. G., ed., Man and his Symbols, second edition, London: Pan Books, 1978
- , Memories, Dreams, Reflections, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, edited by Aniela Jaffé, Glasgow: Collins, 1967
- , Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961
- , Psychological Reflections: A New Anthology of His Writings 1905-1961, edited by Jolande Jacobi, second edition, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971
- , Psychology and Alchemy, translated by R. F. C. Hull, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, second edition, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968 (vol. 12 of Collected Works)
- , The Symbolic Life, translated by R. F. C. Hull, edited by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977 (vol. 18 of Collected Works)
- , Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle, translated by R. F. C. Hull, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972 (vol. 8 of Collected Works, pp. 419-519)
- Martin, P. W., Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Work of Jung, Eliot and Toynbee, Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976
- Veikos Theophilos, Philosophy and Science [Φιλοσοφία και 'Επιστήμη], Athens: Gregores, 1980
- Watts, Allan W., The Way of Zen, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1962